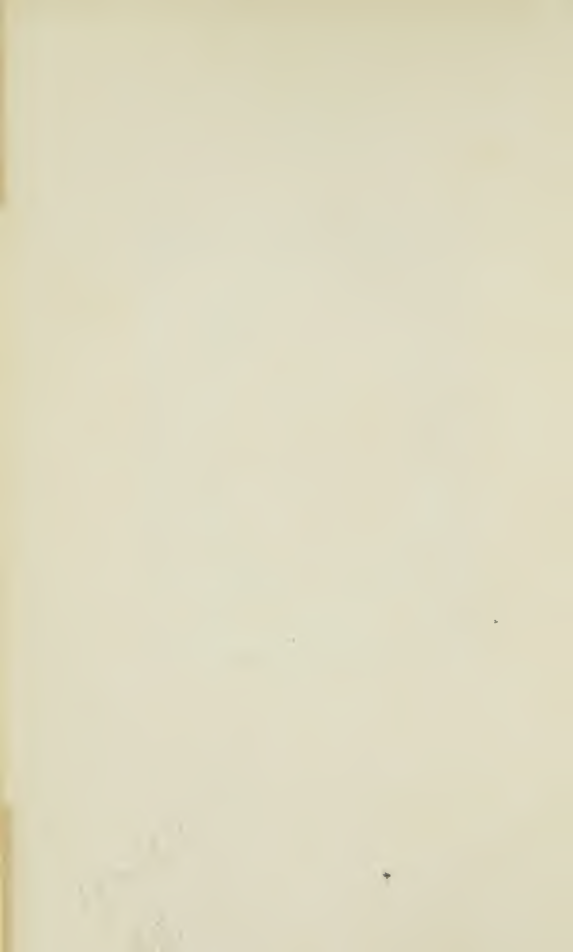
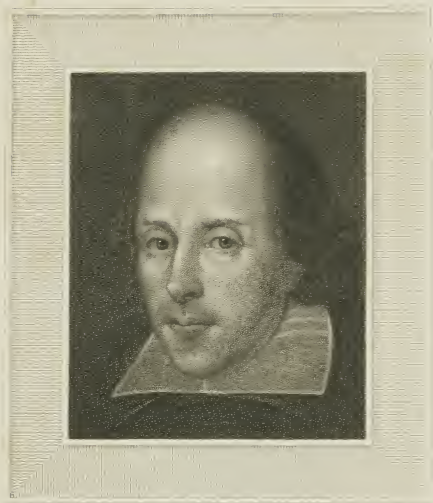


Presented
to
the Centre for
REFORMATION
and
RENAISSANCE
STUDIES

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY

by F. J. Hoeriger





Engraved by W. D. S.

William Shakspeare

Engraved by W. D. S. from a drawing by J. N. P. & J. H. S.

THE
PLAYS
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.
IN TWENTY-ONE VOLUMES.

WITH
THE CORRECTIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS
OF
VARIOUS COMMENTATORS.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

NOTES,

BY

SAMUEL JOHNSON AND GEORGE STEEVENS.

REVISED AND AUGMENTED

BY ISAAC REED,

WITH A GLOSSARIAL INDEX.

THE SIXTH EDITION.

ΤΗΣ ΦΥΣΕΩΣ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΤΣ ΗΝ, ΤΟΝ ΚΑΛΑΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΒΡΕΧΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΝΟΥΝ.
Vet. Auct. apud Suidam.

Time, which is continually washing away the dissoluble Fabricks of other
Poets, passes without Injury by the Adamant of SHAKSPEARE.

Dr. Johnson's Preface.

MULTA DIES, VARIUSQUE LABOR MUTABILIS ÆVI
RETULIT IN MELIUS, MULTOS ALTERNA REVISENS
LUSIT, ET IN SOLIDO RURSUS TORTUNA LOCAVIT.

Virgil.

LONDON:

Printed for J. Nichols and Son; F. C. and J. Rivington; J. Stockdale;
W. Lowndes; G. Wilkie and J. Robinson; T. Egerton; J. Walker;
Scatcherd and Letterman; W. Clarke and Sons; J. Barker; J. Cuthell;
R. Lea; Lackington and Co.; J. Deighton; J. White and Co.; B. Crosby
and Co.; W. Earle; J. Gray and Son; Longman and Co.; Cadell and
Davies; J. Harding; R. H. Evans; J. Booker; S. Bagster; J. Mawman;
Black and Co.; J. Black; J. Richardson; J. Booth; Newman and
Co.; R. Pheny; R. Scholey; J. Murray; J. Asperne; J. Faulder;
R. Baldwin; Cradock and Joy; Sharpe and Hailes; Johnson and Co.;
Gale and Co.; G. Robinson; C. Brown; and Wilson and Son, York.

1813.

11-15-20

REF. & REN.

112

CONTENTS.

VOL. I.

<i>ADVERTISEMENT</i>	i
<i>Advertisement by Mr. Reed</i>	xi
<i>Advertisement by Mr. Steevens</i>	1
<i>Preface to Mr. Richardson's Proposals, &c.</i>	4
<i>Proposals by William Richardson</i>	14
<i>Supplement to Proposals</i>	17
<i>Advertisement by Mr. Steevens to edition of 1793</i>	24
<i>Rowe's Life of Shakspeare, &c.</i>	57
<i>Anecdotes of Shakspeare from Oldys, &c.</i>	120
<i>Baptisms, Marriages, &c.</i>	132
<i>Shakspeare's Coat of Arms</i>	146
<i>Shakspeare's Mortgage</i>	149
<i>Shakspeare's Will</i>	154
<i>Dedication by Hemings and Condell</i>	163
<i>Preface by ditto</i>	166
<i>— by Pope</i>	168
<i>— by Theobald</i>	188
<i>— by Hanmer</i>	222
<i>— by Warburton</i>	226
<i>— by Johnson</i>	245
<i>Advertisement to twenty Plays, by Steevens</i>	311
<i>Preface by Capell</i>	326
<i>Advertisement by Steevens</i>	396
<i>Preface by M. Mason</i>	417
<i>Advertisement by Reed</i>	421
<i>Preface by Malone</i>	424

CONTENTS.

VOL. II.

<i>Dr. Farmer's Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare</i>	1
<i>Colman's Remarks on it</i>	87
<i>Ancient Translations from Classick Authors</i>	92
<i>Entries of Shakspeare's Plays on the Stationers' Books</i>	119
<i>List of ancient Editions of Shakspeare's Plays</i>	139
<i>List of modern Editions</i>	148
<i>List of ancient Editions of Shakspeare's Poems</i>	152
<i>List of modern ditto</i>	153
<i>List of altered Plays from Shakspeare</i>	156
<i>List of detached Pieces of Criticism on Shakspeare, his Editors, &c.</i>	167
<i>Commendatory Verses on Shakspeare</i>	181
<i>Malone's Attempt to ascertain the Order of Shakspeare's Plays</i>	222
<i>Malone's Essay on Ford's Pamphlet, &c.</i>	374
<i>Steevens's Remarks on it</i>	408

VOL. III.

<i>Malone's historical Account of the English Stage</i>	1
<i>Additions</i>	351
<i>Additions by Steevens</i>	404
<i>Further Historical Account by Chalmers</i>	417
<i>Addenda by the same</i>	513

VOL. IV.

TEMPEST.

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

CONTENTS.

VOL. V.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

TWELFTH NIGHT.

VOL. VI.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

VOL. VII.

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST.

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

VOL. VIII.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

VOL. IX.

TAMING OF THE SHREW.

WINTER'S TALE.

VOL. X.

MACBETH.

KING JOHN.

VOL. XI.

KING RICHARD II.

KING HENRY IV. Part I.

VOL. XII.

KING HENRY IV. Part II.

KING HENRY V.

VOL. XIII.

KING HENRY VI. Part I.

KING HENRY VI. Part II.

CONTENTS.

VOL. XIV.

KING HENRY VI. Part III.

Dissertation, &c.

KING RICHARD III.

VOL. XV.

KING HENRY VIII.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

VOL. XVI.

CORIOLANUS.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

VOL. XVII.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

KING LEAR.

VOL. XVIII.

HAMLET.

CYMBELINE.

VOL. XIX.

TIMON OF ATHENS.

OTHELLO.

VOL. XX.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

VOL. XXI.

TITUS ANDRONICUS.

PERICLES, and Dissertations.

Addenda, and Glossarial Index.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present edition has been carefully revised by the late Mr. Reed's coadjutor in the fifth edition, who was particularly recommended to the proprietors for that office by Mr. Steevens: how he has answered such a recommendation is left to the public to judge: he only begs permission to say, that he hopes the present edition will not be found inferior to any of the preceding.

In a work extending to twenty-one volumes some errors will unavoidably occur; such as have happened in former editions have been corrected in this: a few notes have been added in their proper places, and a short Appendix in the twenty-first volume, of some observations which occurred to the editor in the course of reading the proof sheets.

In the twentieth volume, Arthur Broke's *Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet* has been carefully revised from a copy of the edition printed in 1562, and collated by Mr. Joseph Haslewood, who also furnished from the *British Bibliographer* the

prose Address to the reader, which is not found in the edition printed in 1587, made use of by Mr. Malone.

A more faithful copy of the portrait of Shakspeare than any before engraved from the picture formerly in the possession of Mr. Steevens is prefixed, and also an engraving of Mr. Flaxman's Monument in Poplar Chapel, to the memory of Mr. Steevens, on which is sculptured his likeness in profile that will be acknowledged a striking resemblance by all who knew him.

A brief memorial of Mr. Reed is justly due in this work, and as that has been so lately done by his friend Mr. Nichols, in the second volume of his *Literary Anecdotes of the eighteenth century*, the following is with his permission extracted from that Magazine of amusing and interesting literary information.

“ISAAC REED, an eminent collector of books and able commentator, was born in the parish of St. Dunstan in the West, where his father passed unambitiously through life, in the useful occupation of a baker, and had the satisfaction of witnessing the son's literary attainments with that enthusiasm which frequently prevails in a strong uncultivated mind.

“ He commenced his public life very respectably, as a solicitor and conveyancer ; but for several years before his death had confined the practical part of his business to the last-mentioned branch of his profession. Placed in a situation which above all others is frequently the road to riches and honour, Mr. Reed’s principal ambition was to acquire a fundamental knowledge of the jurisprudence of his country ; and thus far he was eminently successful. But the law, however alluring its prospects, had not charms sufficient to engage his whole attention ; he loved, he venerated, that admirable system, which from the days of Alfred and Canute, from the bold usurping Norman to the present reign, has been regularly ameliorating ; but he detested the chicanery of which he was almost daily a witness in many of its professors. If ever there was a mind devoid of guile, it was Isaac Reed’s ; and an attempt to make “ the worse appear the better cause,” would have been with him a breach of moral obligation. Hence an extensive line of business was necessarily precluded ; but he had the satisfaction of numbering among his clients many highly valued friends ; and other avenues to fame, if not to fortune, were open to his capacious mind. His intimate knowledge of ancient English literature was unbounded. His own publications, though not very numerous, were all valuable ; and he was more satisfied with being

a faithful editor, than ambitious of being an original composer.

“ In the year 1768, he collected into one volume, 12mo. “ The Poetical Works of the Hon. Lady M[ar]y W[ortle]y M[ontagu]e.” His other publications were, Middleton’s “ Witch, a Tragi-Coomodie,” a few copies only for his friends, 1778; the sixth volume of Dr. Young’s Works, 1778, 12mo. “ Biographia Dramatica,” 2 volumes, 8vo. 1782, founded upon “ Baker’s Companion to the Playhouse :” the biographical department of this work is the result of diligent enquiry, and his strictures on the productions of the English drama display sound judgment and correct taste ; an improved edition of Dodsley’s old Plays, with Notes, 12 vols. 8vo. 1780 ; Dodsley’s Collection of Poems, with Biographical Notes, 6 vols. 8vo. 1782 ; “ The Repository ; a select Collection of Fugitive Pieces of Wit and Humour, in Prose and Verse, by the most eminent Writers,” 4 vols. 8vo. 1777—1783 ; Pearch’s Collection of Poems, with Biographical Notes, 4 vols. 8vo. 1783, (which some have ascribed to the late George Keate, esq.) ; “ A Complete Collection of the Cambridge Prize Poems, from their first Institution, in 1750, to the present Time,” 8vo. 1773 ; an edition of Johnson and Steevens’s Shakspeare, 10 vol. 8vo. 1785, which he undertook at the request of Dr. Farmer and

Mr. Steevens, the latter of whom resigning, for this time, the office of Editor; some short Lives of those English Poets who were added to Dr. Johnson's Collection, in 1790; the Fifth Edition of Shakspeare, in 21 vols. 8vo. 1803, with his name prefixed; an effort which he with some difficulty was persuaded to make. So extremely averse indeed was he to appearing before the publick, that, when he was asked, as a matter of course, to add only his initials at the end of the prefatory advertisement of Dr. Young, his answer was nearly in these words: "I solemnly declare, that I have such a thorough dread of putting my name to any publication whatever, that, if I were placed in the alternative either of so doing or of standing in the pillory, I believe I should prefer the latter." He was a valuable contributor to the Westminster Magazine, from 1773-4 to about the year 1780. The biographical articles in that Miscellany are from his pen. He became also very early one of the proprietors of the European Magazine, and was a constant contributor to it for many years, particularly in the biographical and critical departments. He was also an occasional volunteer in the pages of Sylvanus Urban. So ample indeed was his collection of literary curiosities, so ready was he in turning to them, and so thoroughly able to communicate information, that no man of character ever applied to him in vain. Even the la-

bours of Dr. Johnson were benefited by his accuracy; and for the last thirty years, there has scarcely appeared any literary work in this country, of the least consequence, that required minute and extensive research, which had not the advantage of his liberal assistance, as the grateful prefaces of a variety of writers have abundantly testified. Among the earliest of these was the edition of Dr. King's Works, 1776, and the Supplement to Swift, in the same year. In both these works Mr. Nichols was most materially indebted to the judicious remarks of Mr. Reed, whose friendly assistance also in many instances contributed to render his "Anecdotes of Mr. Bowyer," in 1782, completer than they otherwise could possibly have been. He contributed also many useful notes to the later editions of Dr. Johnson's Lives of the Poets. To enumerate the thanks of the authors whom he had assisted by his advice would be endless.

"With the late Dr. Farmer, the worthy master of Emanuel College, Cambridge, he was long and intimately acquainted, and regularly for many years spent an autumnal month with him at that pleasant seat of learning. At that period the theatricals of Stirbitch Fair had powerful patronage in the Combination-room of Emanuel, where the routine of performance was regularly settled, and

where the charms of the bottle were early deserted for the pleasures of the sock and buskin. In the boxes of this little theatre Dr. Farmer was the *Arbiter Elegantiarum*, and presided with as much dignity and unaffected ease as within the walls of his own College. He was regularly surrounded by a large party of congenial friends and able critics; among whom Mr. Reed and Mr. Steevens were constantly to be found. The last-mentioned gentleman, it may not here improperly be noticed, had so inviolable an attachment to Mr. Reed, that notwithstanding a capriciousness of temper which often led him to differ from his dearest friends, and occasionally to lampoon them, there were three persons with whom through life he scarcely seemed to have a shade of difference of opinion; but those three were gentlemen with whom it was not possible for the most captious person to have differed—Dr. Farmer, Mr. Tyrwhitt, and Isaac Reed.

“ To follow Mr. Reed into the more retired scenes of private and domestic life: he was an early riser; and, whenever the avocations of business permitted leisure, applied, in general, several hours in the morning, either in study or in the arrangement of his numerous scarce Tracts. His collection of books, which were chiefly English, was perhaps one of the most extensive in that kind

that any private individual ever possessed; and he had a short time before his death made arrangements for disposing of a great part of it. The whole was afterwards sold by auction.

“ He was naturally companionable; and frequently enjoyed the conversation of the table at the houses of a select circle of friends, to whom his great knowledge of men and books, and his firm but modest mode of communicating that knowledge, always rendered him highly acceptable.

“ Exercise was to him a great source both of health and pleasure. Frequently has the compiler of this article enjoyed a twelve miles walk to partake with him in the hospitalities of Mr. Gough at Enfield, and the luxury of examining with perfect ease the rarer parts of an uncommonly rich topographical library. But the most intimate of his friends was the friend of human kind at large, the mild, benevolent Daniel Braithwaite, esq. late comptroller of the Foreign Post-office, who has frequently beguiled him into an agreeable saunter of near twenty miles, to his delightful retreat in the pleasant village of Amwell, where he was always as happy, and as much at home as Dr. Johnson was at Mr. Thrale’s at Streatham.

“ With Mr. Bindley, senior Commissioner of the Stamp-office, whose skill and taste in collecting rare and valuable articles in literature were so congenial to his own, Mr. Reed had many interchanges of reciprocal obligation. But his more immediate associates were, James Sayer, esq. of Great Ormond-street; Mr. Romney and Mr. Hayley, the eminent painter and poet; William Long, esq. the celebrated surgeon; Edmund Malone,* esq. the great rival commentator on Shakspeare; J. P. Kemble, esq. not only an excellent critick and collector of dramatic curiosities, but himself, (perhaps with the exception of his sister only,) the best living exemplar of Shakspeare’s text; the Rev. H. J. Todd, the illustrator of Milton and Spenser, to whom he left a legacy for his trouble in superintending the sale of his library; Francis Newbery, esq. of Heathfield, co. Sussex; Richard Sharp, esq. M. P. for Castle Rising; and George Nicol, esq. the judicious purveyor of literary curiosities for the King. Some of these gentlemen were members of a select dining-club, of which he had from its origin been the president.

* Mr. Malone died May 25, 1812. He was brother to Lord Sunderlin; and had he survived his Lordship would have succeeded to the title, the remainder being in him. Like Mr. Steevens, he devoted his life and his fortune to the task of making the great Bard better known by his countrymen.

“ He died Jan. 5, 1807, at his chambers in Staple-inn, of which honourable society he had long been one of the antients; and his remains were interred at Amwell, agreeably to his own request.”

Library of the
Royal Institution,
Dec. 9, 1812.

ADVERTISEMENT.

PREFIXED TO EDITION 1803.

THE merits of our great dramattick Bard, the pride and glory of his country, have been so amply displayed by persons of various and first-rate talents, that it would appear like presumption in any one, and especially in him whose name is subscribed to this Advertisement, to imagine himself capable of adding any thing on so exhausted a subject. After the labours of men of such high estimation as Rowe, Pope, Warburton, Johnson, Farmer, and Steevens, with others of inferior name, the rank of Shakspeare in the poetical world is not a point at this time subject to controversy. His pre-eminence is admitted; his superiority confessed. Long ago it might be said of him, as it has been, in the energetick lines of Johnson, of one almost his equal,—

“ At length, our mighty bard’s victorious lays
“ Fill the loud voice of universal praise ;
“ And baffled spite, with hopeless anguish dumb,
“ Yields to renown the centuries to come.”

a renown, established on so solid a foundation, as to bid defiance to the caprices of fashion, and to the canker of time.

Leaving, therefore, the Author in quiet possession of that fame which neither detraction can lessen nor panegyrick increase, the Editor will proceed to the consideration of the work now presented to the Publick.

It contains the last improvements and corrections of Mr. Steevens,* by whom it was prepared for the

* Of one to whom the readers of Shakspeare are so much obliged, a slight memorial will not here be considered as misplaced.

GEORGE STEEVENS was born at Poplar, in the county of Middlesex, in the year 1736. His father, a man of great respectability, was engaged in a business connected with the East India Company, by which he acquired an handsome fortune. Fortunately for his son, and for the publick, the clergyman of the place was Dr. Gloucester Ridley, a man of great literary accomplishments, who is styled by Dr. Lowth *poeta natus*. With this gentleman an intimacy took place that united the two families closely together, and probably gave the younger branches of each that taste for literature which both afterwards ardently cultivated. The first part of Mr. Steevens's education he received under Mr. Wooddeson, at Kingston-upon-Thames, where he had for his school-fellows George Keate the poet, and Edward Gibbon the historian. From this seminary he removed in 1753 to King's College, Cambridge, and entered there under the tuition of the Reverend Dr. Barford. After staying a few years at the University, he left it without taking a degree, and accepted a commission in the Essex militia, in which service he continued a few years longer. In 1763 he lost his father, from whom he inherited an ample property, which if he did not lessen he certainly did not increase. From this period he seems to have determined on the course of his future life, and devoted himself

press, and to whom the praise is due of having first adopted, and carried into execution, Dr. Johnson's

to literary pursuits, which he followed with unabated vigour, but without any lucrative views, as he never required, or accepted, the slightest pecuniary recompence for his labours. His first residence was in the Temple, afterwards at Hampton, and lastly at Hampstead, where he continued near thirty years. In this retreat his life passed in one unbroken tenor, with scarce any variation, except an occasional visit to Cambridge, walking to London in the morning, six days out of seven, for the sake of health and conversation, and returning home in the afternoon of the same day. By temperance and exercise he continued healthy and active until the last two years of his life, and to the conclusion of it did not relax his attention to the illustration of Shakspeare, which was the first object of his regard. He died the 22d of January, 1800, and was buried in Poplar chapel.

To the eulogium contained in the following epitaph by Mr. Hayley, which differs in some respect from that inscribed on the monument in Poplar chapel, those who really knew Mr. Steevens will readily subscribe :

- “ Peace to these ashes ! once the bright attire
 “ Of STEEVENS, sparkling with æthereal fire !
 “ Whose talents, varying as the diamond's ray,
 “ Could fascinate alike the grave or gay !
- “ How oft has pleasure in the social hour
 “ Smil'd at his wit's exhilarating power !
 “ And truth attested, with delight intense,
 “ The serious charms of his colloquial sense !
 “ His genius, that to wild luxuriance swell'd,
 “ His large, yet latent, charity excell'd :
 “ Want with such true beneficence he cheer'd,
 “ All that his bounty gave his zeal endear'd.

admirable plan of illustrating Shakspeare by the study of writers of his own time. By following this track, most of the difficulties of the author have been overcome, his meaning (in many instances apparently lost) has been recovered, and much wild unfounded conjecture has been happily got rid of. By perseverance in this plan, he effected more to the elucidation of his author than any if not all his predecessors, and justly entitled himself to the distinction of being confessed the best editor of Shakspeare.

The edition which now solicits the notice of the publick is faithfully printed from the copy given by Mr. Steevens to the proprietors of the preceding edition, in his life-time; with such additions as, it is presumed, he would have received, had he lived to determine on them himself. The whole was entrusted to the care of the present Editor, who has, with the aid of an able and vigilant assistant, and a careful printer, endeavoured to fulfil the trust reposed in him, as well as continued ill health and depressed spirits would permit.

“ Learning, as vast as mental power could seize,
 “ In sport displaying and with grateful ease,
 “ Lightly the stage of chequer'd life he trod,
 “ Careless of chance, confiding in his God !

“ This tomb may perish, but not so his name
 “ Who shed new lustre upon SHAKSPEARE'S fame !”

By a memorandum in the hand-writing of Mr. Steevens it appeared to be his intention to adopt and introduce into the prolegomena of the present edition some parts of two late works of Mr. George Chalmers. An application was therefore made to that gentleman for his consent, which was immediately granted; and to render the favour more acceptable, permission was given to divest the extracts of the offensive asperities of controversy.

The portrait of Shakspeare prefixed to the present edition, is a copy of the picture formerly belonging to Mr. Felton, now to Alderman Boydell, and at present at the Shakspeare Gallery, in Pall Mall. After what has been written on the subject it will be only necessary to add, that Mr. Steevens persevered in his opinion that this, of all the portraits, had the fairest chance of being a genuine likeness of the author. Of the canvas Chandois picture he remained convinced that it possessed no claims to authenticity.

Some apology is due to those gentlemen who, during the course of the publication, have obligingly offered the present Editor their assistance, which he should thankfully have received, had he considered himself at liberty to accept their favours. He was fearful of loading the page, which Mr. Steevens in some instances thought too much crowded already, and therefore confined himself to the copy left to his care by his deceased friend.

But it is time to conclude.—He will therefore detain the reader no longer than just to offer a few words in extenuation of any errors or omissions that may be discovered in his part of the work ; a work which, notwithstanding the utmost exertion of diligence, has never been produced without some imperfection. Circumstanced as he has been, he is sensible how inadequate his powers were to the task imposed on him, and hopes for the indulgence of the reader. He feels that “the inaudible and noiseless foot of time” has insensibly brought on that period of life and those attendant infirmities which weaken the attachment to early pursuits, and diminish their importance :

“ Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage.”

To the admonition he is content to pay obedience, and satisfied that the hour is arrived when “well-timed retreat” is the measure which prudence dictates, and reason will approve, he here bids adieu to SHAKSPEARE, and his Commentators ; acknowledging the candour with which very imperfect efforts have been received, and wishing for his successors the same gratification he has experienced in his humble endeavours to illustrate the greatest poet the world ever knew.

ISAAC REED.

Staple Inn,
May 2, 1803.

ADVERTISEMENT.

“WHEN I said I would die a bachelor, (cries Benedick,) I did not think I should live till I were married.” The present Editor of *Shakspeare* may urge a kindred apology in defence of an opinion hazarded in his Prefatory Advertisement; for when he declared his disbelief in the existence of a genuine likeness of our great Dramatick Writer, he most certainly did not suppose any Portrait of that description could have occurred, and much less that he himself should have been instrumental in producing it.¹ He is happy, however, to find he was mistaken in both his suppositions; and consequently has done his utmost to promote the appearance of an accurate and finished Engraving, from a Picture which had been unfaithfully as well as poorly imitated by *Droeshout* and *Marshall*.²

¹ See Mr. Richardson's Proposals, p. 4.

² “*Martin Droeshout*. One of the indifferent engravers of the last century. He resided in England, and was employed by the booksellers. His portraits, which are the best part of his works, have nothing but their scarcity to recommend them. He engraved the head of *Shakspeare*, *John Fox*, the martyrologist, *John Howson*, Bishop of Durham,” &c.

Strutt's *Dictionary of Engravers*, Vol. I. p. 264.

“*William Marshall*. He was one of those laborious artists whose engravings were chiefly confined to the ornamenting of books. And indeed his patience and assiduity is all we can admire when we turn over his prints, which are prodigiously numerous. He worked with the graver only, but in a dry tasteless style; and from the similarity which appears in the design of all his portraits, it is *supposed* that he worked from his own drawings

Of the character repeatedly and deliberately bestowed by the same Editor on the first of these old engravers, not a single word will be retracted; for, if the judgment of experienced artists be of any value, the plate by Droeshout now under consideration has (in one instance at least) established his claim to the title of "a most abominable imitator of humanity."

Mr. *Fuseli* has pronounced, that the Portrait described in the Proposals of Mr. *Richardson*, was the work of a Flemish hand. It may also be observed, that the verses in praise of *Droeshout's* performance, were probably written as soon as they were bespoke, and before their author had found opportunity or inclination to compare the plate with its original. He might previously have known that the picture conveyed a just resemblance of Shakspeare; took it for granted that the copy would be exact; and, therefore, rashly assigned to the engraver a panegyrick which the painter had more immediately deserved. It is lucky indeed for those to whom metrical recommendations are necessary, that custom does not require they should be delivered upon oath.

It is likewise probable that *Ben Jonson* had no intimate acquaintance with the graphick art, and might not have been over-solicitous about the style in which *Shakspeare's* lineaments were transmitted to posterity.

G. S.

after the life, though he did not add the words *ad vivum*, as was common upon such occasions. But if we grant this to be the case, the artist will acquire very little additional honour upon that account; for there is full as great a want of taste manifest in the design, as in the execution of his works on copper." &c. *Ibid.* Vol. II. p. 125.

N. B. The character of Shakspeare as a poet; the condition of the ancient copies of his plays; the merits of his respective editors, &c. &c. have been so minutely investigated on former occasions, that any fresh advertisement of similar tendency might be considered as a tax on the reader's patience.

It may be proper indeed to observe, that the errors we have discovered in our last edition are here corrected; and that some explanations, &c. which seemed to be wanting, have likewise been supplied.

To these improvements it is now become our duty to add the genuine Portrait of our author. For a particular account of the discovery of it, we must again refer to the Proposals of Mr. Richardson,³ at whose expence two engravings from it have been already made.

We are happy to subjoin, that Messieurs Boydell, who have resolved to decorate their magnificent edition of Shakspeare with a copy from the same original picture lately purchased by them from Mr. Felton, have not only favoured us with the use of it, but most obligingly took care, by their own immediate superintendance, that as much justice should be done to our engraving, as to their own.

³ See p. 4.

PREFACE

TO

MR. RICHARDSON'S PROPOSALS, &c.

1794.

BEFORE the patronage of the publick is solicited in favour of a new engraving from the *only genuine portrait of Shakspeare*, it is proper that every circumstance relative to the discovery of it should be faithfully and circumstantially related.

On Friday, August 9, Mr. Richardson, print-seller, of Castle Street, Leicester Square, assured Mr. Steevens that, in the course of business having recently waited on Mr. Felton, of Curzon Street, May Fair, this gentleman showed him an ancient head resembling the portrait of Shakspeare as engraved by Martin Droeshout in 1623.

Having frequently been misled by similar reports founded on inaccuracy of observation or uncertainty of recollection, Mr. Steevens was desirous to see the Portrait itself, that the authenticity of it might be ascertained by a deliberate comparison with Droeshout's performance. Mr. Felton, in the most obliging and liberal manner, permitted Mr. Richardson to bring the head, frame and all, away with him; and several unquestionable judges have concurred in pronouncing that the plate of Droeshout conveys not only a general likeness of its original, but an exact and particular one as far

as this artist had ability to execute his undertaking. Droeshout could follow the outlines of a face with tolerable accuracy,⁴ but usually left them as hard as if hewn out of a rock. Thus, in the present instance, he has servilely transferred the features of Shakspeare from the painting to the copper, omitting every trait of the mild and benevolent character which his portrait so decidedly affords.—There are, indeed, just such marks of a placid and amiable disposition in this resemblance of our poet, as his admirers would have wished to find.

This Portrait is not painted on *canvas*, like the Chandos Head,⁵ but on *wood*. Little more of it

⁴ Of some volunteer infidelities, however, Droeshout may be convicted. It is evident from the picture that Shakspeare was partly bald, and consequently that his forehead appeared unusually high. To remedy, therefore, what seemed a defect to the engraver, he has amplified the brow on the right side. For the sake of a more picturesque effect, he has also incurvated the line in the fore part of the ruff, though in the original it is mathematically straight. See note 9, p. 6.

It may be observed, however, to those who examine trifles with rigour, that our early-engraved portraits were produced in the age when few had skill or opportunity to ascertain their faithfulness or infidelity. The confident artist therefore assumed the liberty of altering where he thought he could improve. The rapid workman was in too much haste to give his outline with correctness; and the mere drudge in his profession contented himself by placing a *caput mortuum* of his original before the public. In short, the inducements to be licentious or inaccurate, were numerous; and the rewards of exactness were seldom attainable, most of our ancient heads of authors being done, at stated prices, for booksellers, who were careless about the verisimilitude of engravings which fashion not unfrequently obliged them to insert in the title-pages of works that deserved no such expensive decorations.

⁵ A living artist, who was apprentice to Roubiliac, declares that when that elegant statuary undertook to execute the figure of Shakspeare for Mr. Garrick, the Chandos picture was borrowed; but that it was, even then, regarded as a performance

than the entire countenance and part of the ruff is left; for the pannel having been split off on one side, the rest was curtailed and adapted to a small frame.⁶ On the back of it is the following inscription, written in a very old hand: "Guil. Shakspeare,⁷ 1597.⁸ R. N." Whether these initials belong to the painter, or a former owner of the picture, is uncertain. It is clear, however, that this is the identical head from which not only the engraving by Droeshout in 1623, but that of Marshall⁹ in 1640 was made; and though the hazards our

of suspicious aspect; though for want of a more authentick archetype, some few hints were received, or pretended to be received, from it.

Roubiliac, towards the close of his life, amused himself by painting in oil, though with little success. Mr. Felton has his poor copy of the Chandos picture in which our author exhibits the complexion of a Jew, or rather that of a chimney-sweeper in the jaundice.

It is singular that neither Garrick, or his friends, should have desired Roubiliac at least to look at the two earliest prints of Shakspeare; and yet even Scheemaker is known to have had no other model for our author's head, than the mezzotinto by Zoust.

⁶ A broker now in the Minories declares, that it is his usual practice to cut down such portraits, as are painted on wood, to the size of such spare frames as he happens to have in his possession.

⁷ It is observable, that this hand writing is of the age of Elizabeth, and that the name of Shakspeare is set down as he himself has spelt it.

⁸ The age of the person represented agrees with the date on the back of the picture. In 1597 our author was in his 33d year, and in the meridian of his reputation, a period at which his resemblance was most likely to have been secured.

⁹ It has hitherto been supposed that Marshall's production was borrowed from that of his predecessor. But it is now manifest that he has given the very singular ruff of Shakspeare as it stands in the original picture, and not as it appears in the plate from it by Martin Droeshout.

author's likeness was exposed to, may have been numerous, it is still in good preservation.

But, as further particulars may be wished for, it should be subjoined, that in the Catalogue of "The fourth Exhibition and Sale by private Contract at the European Museum, King-Street, St. James's Square, 1792," this picture was announced to the publick in the following words:

"No. 359. A curious portrait of Shakspeare, painted in 1597."

On the 31st of May, 1792, Mr. Felton bought it for five guineas; and afterwards urging some inquiry concerning the place it came from, Mr. Wilson, the conductor of the Museum already mentioned, wrote to him as follows:

"To Mr. S. Felton, Drayton, Shropshire.

"SIR,

"—The Head of Shakespeare was purchased out of an old house known by the sign of the Boar in Eastcheap, London, where Shakespeare and his friends used to resort,—and report says, was painted by a Player of that time,¹ but whose name I have not been able to learn.—

"I am, Sir, with great regard,

"Your most obed^t. servant,

"Sept. 11, 1792."

"J. Wilson."

¹ The player alluded to was Richard Burbage.

A Gentleman who, for several years past, has collected as many pictures of Shakspeare as he could hear of, (in the hope that he might at last procure a genuine one,) declares that the

August 11, 1794, Mr. Wilson assured Mr. Steevens, that this portrait was found between four and five years ago at a broker's shop in the Minories, by a man of fashion, whose name must be concealed: that it afterwards came (attended by the Eastcheap story, &c.) with a part of that gentleman's collection of paintings, to be sold at the European Museum, and was exhibited there for about three months, during which time it was seen by Lord Leicester and Lord Orford, who both allowed it to be a genuine picture of Shakspeare.—It is natural to suppose that the mutilated state of it prevented either of their Lordships from becoming its purchaser.

How far the report on which Mr. Wilson's narratives (respecting the place where this picture was met with, &c.) were built, can be verified by evidence at present within reach, is quite immaterial, as our great dramattick author's portrait displays indubitable marks of its own authenticity. It is apparently not the work of an amateur, but of an artist by profession; and therefore could hardly have been the production of Burbage, the principal actor of his time, who (though he certainly handled the pencil) must have had insufficient leisure to perfect himself in oil-painting, which was then so little understood and practised by the natives of this kingdom.²

Eastcheap legend has accompanied the majority of them, from whatever quarter they were transmitted.

It is therefore high time that picture-dealers should avail themselves of another story, this being completely worn out, and no longer fit for service.

² Much confidence, perhaps, ought not to be placed in this remark, as a succession of limners now unknown might have pursued their art in England from the time of Hans Holbein to that of Queen Elizabeth.

Yet, by those who allow to possibilities the influence of facts, it may be said that this picture was probably the ornament of a club-room in Eastcheap, round which other resemblances of contemporary poets and players might have been arranged:—that the Boar's Head, the scene of Falstaff's jollity, might also have been the favourite tavern of Shakespeare:—that, when our author returned over London Bridge from the Globe theatre, this was a convenient house of entertainment; and that for many years afterwards (as the tradition of the neighbourhood reports) it was understood to have been a place where the wits and wags of a former age were assembled, and their portraits repositied. To such suppositions it may be replied, that Mr. Sloman, who quitted this celebrated publick house in 1767, (when all its furniture, *which had devolved to him from his two immediate predecessors*, was sold off,) declared his utter ignorance of any picture on the premises, except a coarse daubing of the Gadshill robbery.³ From hence the following proba-

³ Philip Jones of Barnard's Inn, the auctioneer who sold off Mr. Sloman's effects, has been sought for; but he died a few years ago. Otherwise, as the knights of the hammer are said to preserve the catalogue of every auction, it might have been known whether pictures constituted any part of the Boar's Head furniture; for Mr. Sloman himself could not affirm that there were no small or obscure paintings above stairs in apartments which he had seldom or ever occasion to visit.

Mrs. Brinn, the widow of Mr. Sloman's predecessor, after her husband's decease quitted Eastcheap, took up the trade of a wire-worker, and lived in Crooked Lane. She died about ten years ago. One, who had been her apprentice (no youth,) declares she was a very particular woman, was circumstantial in her narratives, and so often repeated them, that he could not possibly forget any article she had communicated relative to the plate, furniture, &c. of the Boar's Head:—that she often spoke of the painting that represented the robbery at Gadshill, but never so much as hinted at any other pictures in the house; and had there

bilities may be suggested:—first, that if Shakspeare's portrait was ever at the Boar's Head, it had been alienated before the fire of London in 1666, when the original house was burnt;—and, secondly, that the path through which the same picture has travelled since, is as little to be determined as the course of a subterraneous stream.

It may also be remarked, that if such a Portrait had existed in Eastcheap during the life of the industrious Vertue,⁴ he would most certainly have procured it, instead of having submitted to take his first engraving of our author from a juvenile likeness of James I. and his last from Mr. Keck's unauthenticated purchase out of the dressing-room of a modern actress.

It is obvious, therefore, from the joint depositions of Mr. Wilson and Mr. Sloman, that an inference disadvantageous to the authenticity of the Boar's Head story must be drawn; for if the portrait in question arrived after a silent progress through obscurity, at the shop of a broker who, being ignorant of its value, sold it for a few shillings, it must necessarily have been unattended by any history whatever. And if it was purchased at a sale of goods at the Boar's Head, as neither the master of the house, or his two predecessors, had the least idea of having possessed such a curiosity, no intelligence could be sent abroad with

been any, he is sure she would not have failed to describe them in her accounts of her former business and place of abode, which supplied her with materials for conversation to the very end of a long life.

⁴ The four last publicans who kept this tavern are said to have filled the whole period, from the time of Vertue's inquiries, to the year 1783, when the Boar's Head, having been untenanted for five years, was converted into two dwellings for shopkeepers.

it from that quarter. In either case then we may suppose, that the legend relative to the name of its painter,⁵ and the place where it was found, (notwithstanding both these particulars *might* be true,) were at hazard appended to the portrait under consideration, as soon as its similitude to Shakspeare had been acknowledged, and his name discovered on the back of it.—This circumstance, however, cannot affect the credit of the picture; for (as the late Lord Mansfield observed in the Douglas controversy) “there are instances in which falshood has been employed in support of a real fact, and that it is no uncommon thing for a man to defend a true cause by fabulous pretences.”

That Shakspeare's family possessed no resemblance of him, there is sufficient reason to believe. Where then was this fashionable and therefore necessary adjunct to his works to be sought for? If any where, in London, the theatre of his fame and fortune, and the only place where painters, at that period, could have expected to thrive by their profession. We may suppose too, that the booksellers who employed Droeshout, discovered the object of their research by the direction of Ben Jonson,⁶ who in the following lines has borne the most ample testimony to the verisimilitude of a portrait which will now be recommended, by a more accurate and finished engraving, to the publick notice :

⁵ The tradition that Burbage painted a likeness of Shakspeare, has been current in the world ever since the appearance of Mr. Granger's *Biographical History*.

⁶ It is not improbable that Ben Jonson furnished the Dedication and Introduction to the first folio, as well as the Commandatory Verses prefixed to it.

" The figure, that thou here seest put,
 " It was for gentle Shakespeare cut ;
 " Wherein the graver had a strife
 " With Nature, to outdoo the life :
 " O, could he but have drawne his wit
 " As well in brasse, as he hath hit
 " His face;⁷ the print would then surpasse
 " All that was ever writ in brasse.
 " But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
 " Not on his picture, but his Booke."

That the legitimate resemblance of such a man has been indebted to chance for its preservation, would excite greater astonishment, were it not recollected, that a portrait of him has lately become an object of far higher consequence and estimation than it was during the period he flourished in, and the twenty years succeeding it ; for the profession of a player was scarcely then allowed to be reputable. This remark, however, ought not to stand unsupported by a passage in *The Microcosmos* of John Davies of Hereford, 4to. 1605, p. 215, where, after having indulged himself in a long and severe strain of satire on the vanity and affectation of the actors of his age, he subjoins—

⁷ ————— as he hath hit

His face ;] It should seem from these words, that the plate prefixed to the folio 1623 exhibited such a likeness of Shakspeare as satisfied the eye of his contemporary, Ben Jonson, who, on an occasion like this, would hardly have ventured to assert what it was in the power of many of his readers to contradict. When will evidence half so conclusive be produced in favour of the Davenantico-Bettertonian-Barryan-Keckian-Nicolsian-Chandosian *canvas*, which bears not the slightest resemblance to the original of Droeshout's and Marshall's engraving ?

“ Players, I loue yee and your qualitie,
 “ As ye are men that pass time not abus’d :
 “ And some I loue for *painting, poesie,** * “ W. S. R. B.”
 “ And say fell fortune cannot be excus’d,
 “ That hath for better uses you refus’d:
 “ Wit, courage, good shape, good partes, are all good,
 “ As long as all these goods are no worse us’d;”
 “ And though *the stage doth staine pure gentle bloud,*
 “ Yet generous yee are in minde and moode.”

The reader will observe from the initials in the margin of the third of these wretched lines, that W. Shakspeare was here alluded to as the *poet*, and R. Burbage as the *painter*.

Yet notwithstanding this compliment to the higher excellencies of our author, it is almost certain that his resemblance owes its present safety to the shelter of a series of garrets and lumber-rooms, in which it had sculked till it found its way into the broker’s shop from whence the discernment of a modern connoisseur so luckily redeemed it.

It may also be observed, that an excellent original of Ben Jonson was lately bought at an obscure auction by Mr. Ritson of Gray’s Inn, and might once have been companion to the portrait of Shakspeare thus fortunately restored, after having been lost to the publick for a century and a half. They are, nevertheless, performances by very different artists. The face of Shakspeare was imitated by a delicate pencil, that of Jonson by a bolder hand. It is not designed, however, to appretiate the distinct value of these pictures; though it must be allowed (as several undoubted originals of old Ben

* ————— are all good,
 As long as all these goods are no worse us’d;] So, in our author’s *Othello*:

“ Where virtue is, these are most virtuous.”

are extant) that an authentick head of Shakspeare is the greater desideratum.

To conclude—those who assume the liberty of despising prints when moderately executed, may be taught by this example the use and value of them; since to a coarse engraving by a second-rate artist,⁹ the publick is indebted for the recovery of the only genuine portrait of its favourite *Shakspeare*.

PROPOSALS

BY

WILLIAM RICHARDSON,

PRINTSELLER, CASTLE STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE,

FOR THE PUBLICATION OF

TWO PLATES

FROM THE PICTURE ALREADY DESCRIBED.

THESE Plates are to be engraved of an octavo size, and in the most finished style, by T. Trotter, A fac-simile of the hand-writing, date, &c. at the

⁹ There is reason to believe that Shakspeare's is the earliest known portrait of Droeshout's engraving. No wonder then that his performances twenty years after, are found to be executed with a somewhat superior degree of skill and accuracy. Yet still he was a poor engraver, and his productions are sought for more on account of their scarcity than their beauty. He seems indeed to have pleased so little in this country, that there are not above six or seven heads of his workmanship to be found.

back of the picture, will be given at the bottom of one of them.

They will be impressed both on octavo and quarto paper, so as to suit the best editions of the plays of Shakspeare.

Price of the pair to Subscribers 7s. 6d. No Proofs will be taken off. Non-subscribers 10s. 6d.

The money to be paid at the time of subscribing, or at the delivery of the prints, which will be ready on December 1st, 1794.

Such portions of the hair, ruff, and drapery, as are wanting in the original picture, will be supplied from Droeshout's and Marshall's copies of it, in which the inanimate part of the composition may be safely followed. The mere outline in half of the plate that accompanies the finished one, will serve to ascertain how far these supplements have been adopted. To such scrupulous fidelity the publick (which has long been amused by inadequate or ideal likenesses of Shakspeare) has an undoubted claim; and should any fine ladies and gentlemen of the present age be disgusted at the stiff garb of our author, they may readily turn their eyes aside, and feast them on the more easy and elegant suit of clothes provided for him by his modern tailors, Messieurs Zoust, Vertue, Houbraken, and the humble imitators of their supposititious drapery.

The dress that Shakspeare wears in this ancient picture, *might* have been a theatrical one; as in the course of observation such another habit has not occurred. Marshall, when he engraved from the same portrait, materially altered its paraphernalia, and, perhaps, because he thought a stage garb did not stand so characteristically before a volume of Poems as before a collection of Plays; and yet it

must be confessed, that this change might have been introduced for no other reason than more effectually to discriminate his own production from that of his predecessor. On the same account also he might have reversed the figure.

N. B. The plates to be delivered in the order they are subscribed for; and subscriptions received at Mr. Richardson's, where the original portrait (by permission of Samuel Felton, Esq.) will be exhibited for the inspection of subscribers, together with the earlier engravings from it by Droeshout in 1623, and Marshall in 1640.¹

WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

Castle Street, Leicester Square,
Nov. 5, 1794.

¹ It is common for an artist who engraves from a painting that has been already engraved, to place the work of his predecessor before him, that he may either catch some hints from it, or learn to avoid its errors. Marshall most certainly did so in the present instance; but while he corrected Droeshout's ruff, he has been led by him to desert his original in an unauthorised expansion of our author's forehead.

SUPPLEMENT

TO THE

PROPOSALS OF MR. RICHARDSON.

WHEN the newly discovered Portrait of our great Dramatick Writer was first shown in Castle Street, the few remaining advocates for the *Chandos* canvas observed, that its unwelcome rival exhibited not a single trait of Shakspeare. But, all on a sudden, these criticks have shifted their ground; and the representation originally pronounced to have been so unlike our author, is since declared to be an immediate copy from the print by Martin Droeshout.

But by what means are such direct contrarities of opinion to be reconciled? If no vestige of the Poet's features was discernible in the Picture, how is it proved to be a copy from an engraving by which alone those features can be ascertained? No man will assert one thing to have been imitated from another, without allowing that there is some unequivocal and determined similitude between the objects compared.—The truth is, that the first point of objection to this unexpected Portrait was soon overpowered by a general suffrage in its favour. A second attack was therefore hazarded, and has yet more lamentably failed.

As a further note of the originality of the Head belonging to Mr. Felton, it may be urged, that the artist who had ability to produce such a delicate

and finished Portrait, could most certainly have made an exact copy from a very coarse print, provided he had not disdained so servile an occupation. On the contrary, a rude engraver like Droeshout, would necessarily have failed in his attempt to express the gentler graces of so delicate a picture. Our ancient handlers of the burin were often faithless to the character of their originals; and it is conceived that some other performances by Droeshout will furnish no exception to this remark.

Such defective imitations, however, even at this period, are sufficiently common. Several prints from well-known portraits of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Romney, are rendered worthless by similar infidelities; for notwithstanding these mezzotints preserve the outlines and general effect of their originals, the appropriate characters of them are as entirely lost as that of Shakspeare under the hand of Droeshout.—Because, therefore, an engraving has only a partial resemblance to its archetype, are we at liberty to pronounce that the one could not have been taken from the other?

It may also be observed, that if Droeshout's plate had been followed by the painter, the line in front of the ruff would have been incurvated, and not have appeared straight, as it is in the smaller print by Marshall from the same picture. In antiquated English portraits, examples of rectilinear ruffs are familiar; but where will be found such another as the German has placed under the chin of his metamorphosed poet? From its pointed corners, resembling the wings of a bat, which are constant indications of mischievous agency, the engraver's ruff would have accorded better with the pursuits of his necromantick countryman, the celebrated *Doctor Faustus*.

In the mean while it is asserted by every adequate judge, that the coincidences between the picture and the print under consideration, are too strong and too numerous to have been the effects of chance. And yet the period at which this likeness of our author must have been produced, affords no evidence that any one of our early limners had condescended to borrow the general outline and disposition of his portraits from the tasteless heads prefixed to volumes issued out by booksellers. The artist, indeed, who could have filched from Droeshout, like Bardolph, might have "stolen a lute-case, carried it twelve leagues, and sold it for three half-pence."

But were the print allowed to be the original, and the painting a mere copy from it, the admission of this fact would militate in full force against the authenticity of every other anonymous and undated portrait from which a wretched old engraving had been made; as it would always enable cavillers to assert, that the painting was subsequent to the print, and not the print to the painting. True judges, however, would seldom fail to determine, (as they have in the present instance,) whether a painting was coldly imitated from a lumpish copper-plate, or taken warm from animated nature.

For the discussion of subjects like these, an eye habituated to minute comparison, and attentive to peculiarities that elude the notice of unqualified observers, is also required. Shakspeare's countenance deformed by Droeshout, resembles the sign of Sir Roger de Coverley, when it had been changed into a Saracen's head; on which occasion the Spectator observes, that the features of the gentle Knight were still apparent through the lineaments of the ferocious Mussulman.

That the leading thought in the verses annexed

to the plate by Droeshout is hacknied and common, will most readily be allowed; and this observation would have carried weight with it, had the lines in question been anonymous. But the subscription of Ben Jonson's name was a circumstance that rendered him immediately responsible for the propriety of an encomium which, however open to dispute, appears to have escaped contradiction, either metrical or prosaick, from the surviving friends of Shakspeare.

But, another misrepresentation, though an involuntary one, and of more recent date, should not be overlooked.

In the matter prefatory to W. Richardson's Proposals, the plate by Vertue from Mr. Keck's (now the *Chandos*) picture, is said to have succeeded the engraving before Mr. Pope's edition of Shakspeare, in six volumes quarto.² But the contrary is the fact; and how is this circumstance to be accounted for? If in 1719 Vertue supposed the head which he afterwards admitted into his Set of Poets, was a genuine representation, how happened it that his next engraving of the same author, in 1725, was taken from quite a different painting, in the collection of the Earl of Oxford? Did the artist, in this instance, direct the judgment of his Lordship and Mr. Pope? or did their joint opinion over-rule that of the artist? These portraits, being wholly unlike each other, could not (were the slightest degree of respect due to either of them) be *both* received as legitimate representations of Shakspeare.—Perhaps, Vertue (who is described by

* This mistake originated from a passage in Lord Orford's *Anecdotes*, &c. 8vo. Vol. V. p. 258, where it is said, and truly, that Vertue's Set of Poets appeared in 1730. The particular plate of Shakspeare, however, as is proved by a date at the bottom of it, was engraved in 1719.

Lord Orford as a lover of truth,) began to doubt the authenticity of the picture from which his first engraving had been made, and was therefore easily persuaded to expend his art on another portrait, the spuriousness of which (to himself at least) was not quite so evident as that of its predecessor.

The publick, for many years past, has been familiarized to a *Vandyckish* head of Shakspeare, introduced by *Simon's* mezzotinto from a painting by Zoust. Hence the countenance of our author's monumental effigy at Westminster was modelled; and a kindred representation of him has been given by Roubiliac. Such is still the Shakspeare that decorates our libraries, and seals our letters. But, *ætatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores*. On a little reflection it might have occurred, that the cavalier turn of head adopted from the gallant partizans of Charles I. afforded no just resemblance of the sober and chastised countenances predominating in the age of Elizabeth, during which our poet flourished, though he survived till James, for about thirteen years, had disgraced the throne.—The foregoing hint may be pursued by the judicious examiner, who will take the trouble to compare the looks and air of Shakspeare's contemporaries with the modern sculptures, &c. designed to perpetuate his image. The reader may then draw an obvious inference from these premises; and conclude, that the portrait lately exhibited to the publick is not supposititious because it presents a less spritely and confident assemblage of features than had usually been imputed to the modest and unassuming parent of the British theatre.—It is certain, that neither the *Zoustian* or *Chandosian canvas* has displayed the least trait of a quiet and gentle bard of the *Elizabethan* age.

To ascertain the original owner of the portrait

now Mr. Felton's, is an undertaking difficult enough; and yet conjecture may occasionally be sent out on a more hopeless errand.

The old pictures at Tichfield House, as part of the Wriothsley property, were divided, not many years ago, between the Dukes of Portland and Beaufort. Some of these paintings that were in good condition were removed to Bulstrode, where two portraits³ of Shakspeare's Earl of Southampton are still preserved. What became of other heads which time or accident had impaired, and at what period the remains of the furniture, &c. of his Lordship's venerable mansion were sold off and dispersed, it may be fruitless to enquire.

Yet, as the likeness of our author lately redeemed from obscurity was the work of some eminent Flemish artist, it was probably painted for a personage of distinction, and might therefore have belonged to the celebrated Earl whom Shakspeare had previously complimented by the dedication of his *Venus and Adonis*. Surely, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that a resemblance of our excellent dramatick poet might have been found in the house of a nobleman who is reported to have loved him well enough to have presented him with a thousand pounds.

To conclude—the names⁴ which have honoured

³ One of these portraits is on *canvas*, and therefore the genuineness of it is controverted, if not denied.

⁴ In the numerous List of Gentlemen who thoroughly examined this original Picture, were convinced of its authenticity, and immediately became Subscribers to W. Richardson, are the names of—Dr. Farmer, Mr. Cracherode, Mr. Bindley, Sir Joseph Banks, Sir George Shuckburgh, Mr. Chalmers, Mr. Reed, Mr. Ritson, Mr. Douce, Mr. Markham, Mr. Weston, Mr. Lysons, Mr. James, Col. Stanley, Mr. Combe, Mr. Lodge, Mess. Smith, sen. and jun. Mr. Nicol, Mr. Boaden, Mr. Pearce, Mr.

the subscription for an engraving from this new-found portrait of Shakspeare, must be allowed to furnish the most decisive estimate of its value.

[~~§~~ *Since the foregoing Paper was received, we have been authorized to inform the Publick, that Messieurs Boydell and Nicol are so thoroughly convinced of the genuineness of Mr. Felton's Shakspeare, that they are determined to engrave it as a Frontispiece to their splendid Edition of our Author, instead of having recourse to the exploded Picture inherited by the Chandos Family.*]

From the *European Magazine*, for December, 1794.

Whitefoord, Mr. Thane, Mess. Boydell, Mr. G. Romney, Mr. Lawrence, (Portrait-painter to his Majesty,) Mr. Bowyer, (Miniature-painter to his Majesty,) Mr. Barry, R. A. (Professor of Painting,) &c. &c. &c.

The following pages, on account of their connection with the subject of Mr. Richardson's Remarks, are suffered to stand as in our last edition.

ADVERTISEMENT

PREFIXED TO EDITION 1793.

THE reader may observe that, contrary to former usage, no head of Shakspeare is prefixed to the present edition of his plays. The undisguised fact is this. The only portrait of him that even pretends to authenticity, by means of injudicious cleaning, or some other accident, has become little better than the "shadow of a shade."⁵ The late Sir Joshua Reynolds indeed once suggested, that whatever person it was designed for, it might have been left, as it now appears, unfinished. Various copies and plates, however, are said at different times to have been made from it; but a regard for truth obliges us to confess that they are all unlike each other,⁶ and convey no distinct resemblance

⁵ Such, we think, were the remarks, that occurred to us several years ago, when this portrait was accessible. We wished indeed to have confirmed them by a second view of it; but a late accident in the noble family to which it belongs, has precluded us from that satisfaction.

⁶ Vertue's portraits have been over-praised on account of their fidelity; for we have now before us six different heads of Shakspeare engraved by him, and do not scruple to assert that they have individually a different cast of countenance. *Cucullus non facit monachum*. The shape of our author's ear-ring and falling-band may correspond in them all, but where shall we find an equal conformity in his features?

Few objects indeed are occasionally more difficult to seize, than the slender traits that mark the character of a face; and the

of the poor remains of their avowed original. Of the drapery and curling hair exhibited in the excellent engravings of Mr. Vertue, Mr. Hall, and Mr. Knight, the painting does not afford a vestige; nor is there a feature or circumstance on the whole canvas, that can with minute precision be delineated.—We must add, that on very vague and dubious authority this head has hitherto been received as a genuine portrait of our author, who probably left behind him no such memorial of his face. As he was careless of the future state of his works, his solicitude might not have extended to the perpetuation of his looks. Had any portrait of him existed, we may naturally suppose it must have belonged to his family, who (as Mark Antony says of a hair of Cæsar) would

“ ——— have mention'd it within their wills,
 “ Bequeathing it as a rich legacy
 “ Unto their issue;”

and were there ground for the report that Shakspeare was the real father of Sir William D'Avenant, and that the picture already spoken of was painted for him, we might be tempted to observe with our author, that the

“ ——— bastard son
 “ Was kinder to his father, than his daughters
 “ Got 'twixt the natural sheets.”

But in support of either supposition sufficient evidence has not been produced. The former of these

eye will often detect the want of them, when the most exact mechanical process cannot decide on the places in which they are omitted.—Vertue, in short, though a laborious, was a very indifferent draughtsman, and his best copies too often exhibit a general instead of a particular resemblance.

tales has no better foundation than the vanity of our *degener Neoptolemus*,⁷ and the latter originates from modern conjecture. The present age will probably allow the vintner's ivy to Sir William, but

⁷ Nor does the same piece of ancient scandal derive much weight from Aubrey's adoption of it. The reader who is acquainted with the writings of this absurd gossip, will scarcely pay more attention to him on the present occasion, than when he gravely assures us that "Anno 1670, not far from Cirencester was an apparition; being demanded whether a good spirit or a bad? returned no answer, but disappeared *with a curious perfume and most melodious twang*." Mr. W. Lilly believes it was a fairy." See Aubrey's *Miscellanies*, edit. 1784, p. 114.—Aubrey, in short, was a dupe to every wag who chose to practise on his credulity; and would most certainly have believed the person who should have told him that Shakspeare himself was a natural son of Queen Elizabeth.

An additional and no less pleasant proof of Aubrey's cullibility, may be found at the conclusion of one of his own Letters to Mr. Ray; where, after the enumeration of several wonderful methods employed by old women and Irishmen to cure the gout, agues, and the bloody flux, he adds: "Sir Christopher Wren told me once [*eating of strawberries*] that if one that has a wound in the head eats them, 'tis mortal."

See *Philosophical Letters between the late learned Mr. Ray &c. Published by William Derham, Chaplain to his Royal Highness George Prince of Wales, & F. R. S.* 8vo. 1718, p. 251.

In the foregoing instance our letter-writer seems to have been perfectly unconscious of the jocularity of Sir Christopher, who would have meant nothing more by his remark, than to secure his strawberries, at the expence of an allusion to the crack in poor Aubrey's head. Thus when Falstaff "did desire to eat some prawns," Mrs. Quickly told him "they were ill for a green wound."

Mr. T. Warton has pleasantly observed that he "cannot suppose Shakspeare to have been the father of a Doctor of Divinity who never laughed;" and—to waste no more words on Sir William D'Avenant,—let but our readers survey his heavy, vulgar, unmeaning face, and, if we mistake not, they will as readily conclude that Shakspeare "never help to make it." So despicable, indeed, is his countenance as represented by Faithorne, that it appears to have sunk that celebrated engraver beneath many a common artist in the same line.

with equal justice will withhold from him the poet's bays.—To his pretensions of descent from Shakspeare, one might almost be induced to apply a ludicrous passage uttered by Fielding's *Phaeton in the Suds*:

“————— by all the parish boys I'm flamm'd:
“ You the sun's son, you rascal! you be d——d.”

About the time when this picture found its way into Mr. Keck's hands, the verification of portraits was so little attended to, that both the Earl of Oxford, and Mr. Pope, admitted a juvenile one of King James I. as that of Shakspeare.⁸ Among the heads of illustrious persons engraved by Houbraken, are several imaginary ones, beside Ben Jonson's and Otway's; and old Mr. Langford positively asserted that, in the same collection, the grandfather of Cock the auctioneer had the honour to personate the great and amiable Thurloe, secretary of state to Oliver Cromwell.

From the price of forty guineas paid for the supposed portrait of our author to Mrs. Barry, the real value of it should not be inferred. The possession of somewhat more animated than canvas, might

⁸ Much respect is due to the authority of portraits that descend in families from heir to heir; but little reliance can be placed on them when they are produced for sale (as in the present instance) by alien hands, almost a century after the death of the person supposed to be represented; and then, (as Edmund says in *King Lear*) “come pat, like the catastrophe of the old comedy.” Shakspeare was buried in 1616; and in 1708 the first notice of this picture occurs. Where there is such a chasm in evidence, the validity of it may be not unfairly questioned, and especially by those who remember a species of fraudulence recorded in Mr. Foote's *Taste*: “Clap Lord Dupe's arms on that half-length of Erasmus; I have sold it him as his great grandfather's third brother, for fifty guineas.”

have been included, though not specified, in a bargain with an actress of acknowledged gallantry.

Yet allowing this to be a mere fanciful insinuation, a rich man does not easily miss what he is ambitious to find. At least he may be persuaded he has found it, a circumstance which, as far as it affects his own content, will answer, for a while, the same purpose. Thus the late Mr. Jennens, of Gopsal in Leicestershire, for many years congratulated himself as owner of another genuine portrait of Shakspeare, and by Cornelius Jansen; nor was disposed to forgive the writer who observed that, being dated in 1610, it could not have been the work of an artist who never saw England till 1618, above a year after our author's death.

So ready, however, are interested people in assisting credulous ones to impose on themselves, that we will venture to predict,—if some opulent dupe to the flimsy artifice of Chatterton should advertise a considerable sum of money for a portrait of the Pseudo-Rowley, such a desideratum would soon emerge from the tutelary crypts of St. Mary Redcliff at Bristol, or a hitherto unheard of repository in the tomb of Syr Thybbot Gorges at Wraxall.¹ It would also come attested as a strong

¹ A kindred trick had actually been passed off by Chatterton on the late Mr. Barrett of Bristol, in whose back parlour was a pretended head of Canynge, most contemptibly scratched with a pen on a small square piece of yellow parchment, and framed and glazed as an authentick icon by the “curyous poyntill” of Rowley. But this same drawing very soon ceased to be stationary, was alternately exhibited and concealed, as the wavering faith of its possessor shifted about, and was prudently withheld at last from the publick eye. Why it was not inserted in the late History of Bristol, as well as Rowley's plan and elevation of its ancient castle, (which all the rules of all the ages of architecture pronounce to be spurious) let the Rowleian advocates inform us.

likeness of our archæological bard, on the faith of a parchment exhibiting the hand and seal of the *dygne Mayster Wylliam Canynge*, setting forth that *Mayster Thomas Rowlie was so entyrelly and passynge wele beloved* of himself, or our poetick knight, that one or the other *causyd hys semblaunce to be ryght conynglye depeyncten on a marveillouse fayre table of wood, and ensevelyd wyth hym, that deth mote theym not clene departyn and putte asunder*.—A similar imposition, however, would in vain be attempted on the editors of Shakspeare, who, with all the zeal of Rowleians, are happily exempt from their credulity.

A former plate of our author, which was copied from Martin Droeshout's in the title-page to the folio 1623, is worn out; nor does so "abominable an imitation of humanity" deserve to be restored. The smaller head, prefixed to the Poems in 1640, is merely a reduced and reversed copy by Marshall from its predecessor, with a few slight changes in attitude and dress.—We boast therefore of no exterior ornaments,² except those of better print and paper than have hitherto been allotted to any octavo edition of Shakspeare.

Justice nevertheless requires us to subjoin, that

We are happy at least to have recollected a single imposition that was too gross for even these gentlemen to swallow.—Mr. Barrett, however, in the year 1776, assured Mr. Tyrwhitt and Mr. Steevens, that he received the aforesaid scrawl of Canynge from Chaterton, who described it as having been found in the prolifick chest, secured by six, or six-and-twenty keys, no matter which.

² They who wish for decorations adapted to this edition of Shakspeare, will find them in Silvester Harding's Portraits and Views, &c. &c. (appropriated to the whole suite of our author's Historical Dramas, &c..) published in thirty numbers.

See *Gent. Mag.* June 1759, p. 257.

had an undoubted picture of our author been attainable, the Booksellers would most readily have paid for the best engraving from it that could have been produced by the most skilful of our modern artists; but it is idle to be at the charge of perpetuating illusions: and who shall offer to point out, among the numerous prints of Shakspeare, any one that is more like him than the rest?^b

The play of *Pericles* has been added to this collection, by the advice of Dr. Farmer. To make room for it, *Titus Andronicus* might have been omitted; but our proprietors are of opinion that some ancient prejudices in its favour may still exist, and for that reason only it is preserved.

We have not reprinted the Sonnets, &c. of Shakspeare, because the strongest act of parliament that could be framed would fail to compel readers into their service; notwithstanding these miscellaneous poems have derived every possible advantage from the literature and judgment of their only intelligent editor, Mr. Malone, whose implements of criticism, like the ivory rake and golden spade in

* List of the different engravings from the Chandosan Shakspeare:

By Vandergucht, to Rowe's edit.	1709.
Vertue, half sheet, Set of Poets	1719.
Do. small oval, Jacob's Lives	1719.
Do. to Warburton's Svo	1747.
Duchange, svo. to Theobald's	1733.
Gravelot, half sheet, Hanmer's edit.	1744.
Houbraken, half sheet, Birch's Heads	1747.
Millar, small oval, Capell's Shakspeare	1766.
Hall, svo. Reed's edit.	1785.
Cook, svo. Bell's edit.	1788.
Knight, svo. Mr. Malone's edit.	1790.
Harding, svo. Set of Prints to Shakspeare	1793.

No two of these Portraits are alike; nor does any one of them bear the slightest resemblance to its wretched original. G. S.

Prudentius, are on this occasion disgraced by the objects of their culture.—Had Shakspeare produced no other works than these, his name would have reached us with as little celebrity as time has conferred on that of Thomas Watson, an older and much more elegant sonneteer.⁶

What remains to be added concerning this republication is, that a considerable number of fresh remarks are both adopted and supplied by the present editors. They have persisted in their former track of reading for the illustration of their author, and cannot help observing that those who receive the benefit of explanatory extracts from ancient writers, little know at what expence of time and labour such atoms of intelligence have been collected.—That the foregoing information, however, may communicate no alarm, or induce the reader to suppose we have “bestowed our whole tediousness” on him, we should add, that many notes have likewise been withdrawn. A few, manifestly erroneous, are indeed retained, to show how much the tone of Shakspearian criticism is changed, or on account of the skill displayed in their confutation; for surely every editor in his turn is occa-

⁶ His Sonnets, though printed without date, were entered in the year 1581, on the books of the Stationers' Company, under the title of “Watson's Passions, manifesting the true Frenzy of Love.”

Shakspeare appears to have been among the number of his readers, having in the following passage of *Venus and Adonis*,—

“Leading him prisoner in a red-rose chain,”

borrowed an idea from his 83d Sonnet:

“The Muses not long since intrapping love

“In chaines of roses,” &c.

Watson, however, declares on this occasion that he imitated Ronsard; and it must be confessed, with equal truth, that in the present instance Ronsard had been a borrower from Anacreon.

sionally entitled to be seen, as he would have shown himself, with his vanquished adversary at his feet. We have therefore been sometimes willing to "bring a corollary, rather than want a spirit." Nor, to confess the truth, did we always think it justifiable to shrink our predecessors to pigmies, that we ourselves, by force of comparison, might assume the bulk of giants.

The present editors must also acknowledge, that unless in particular instances, where the voice of the publick had decided against the remarks of Dr. Johnson, they have hesitated to displace them; and had rather be charged with superstitious reverence for his name, than censured for a presumptuous disregard of his opinions.

As a large proportion of Mr. Monck Mason's strictures on a former edition of Shakspeare are here inserted, it has been thought necessary that as much of his Preface as was designed to introduce them, should accompany their second appearance. Any formal recommendation of them is needless, as their own merit is sure to rank their author among the most diligent and sagacious of our celebrated poet's annotators.

It may be proper, indeed, to observe, that a few of these remarks are omitted, because they had been anticipated; and that a few others have excluded themselves by their own immoderate length; for he who publishes a series of comments unattended by the text of his author, is apt to "overflow the measure" allotted to marginal criticism. In these cases, either the commentator or the poet must give way, and no reader will patiently endure to see "Alcides beaten by his page."—*Inferior volat umbra deo.*—Mr. M. Mason will also forgive us if we add, that a small number of his proposed

amendments are suppressed through honest commiseration. " 'Tis much he dares, and he has a wisdom that often guides his valour to act in safety;" yet occasionally he forgets the prudence that should attend conjecture, and therefore, in a few instances, would have been produced only to have been persecuted.—May it be subjoined, that the freedom with which the same gentleman has treated the notes of others, seems to have authorized an equal degree of licence respecting his own? And yet, though the sword may have been drawn against him, he shall not complain that its point is "unbated and envenomed;" for the conductors of this undertaking do not scruple thus openly to express their wishes that it may have merit enough to provoke a revision from the acknowledged learning and perspicacity of their Hibernian coadjutor.—Every re-impression of our great dramattick master's works must be considered in some degree as experimental; for their corruptions and obscurities are still so numerous, and the progress of fortunate conjecture so tardy and uncertain, that our remote descendants may be perplexed by passages that have perplexed us; and the readings which have hitherto disunited the opinions of the learned, may continue to disunite them as long as England and Shakspeare have a name. In short, the peculiarity once ascribed to the poetick isle of Delos,^s may be exemplified in our author's text, which, on account of readings alternately received and reprobated, must remain in an unsettled state, and float in obedience to every gale of contradictory criticism.—Could a perfect and decisive edition of the following scenes

^s " —nec instabili famâ superabere Delo."

Stat. Achill. I. 388.

be produced, it were to be expected only (though we fear in vain) from the hand of Dr. Farmer,⁹ whose more serious avocations forbid him to undertake what every reader would delight to possess.

But as we are often reminded by our "brethren of the craft," that this or that emendation, however apparently necessary, is not the *genuine text of Shakspeare*, it might be imagined that we had received this text from its fountain head, and were therefore certain of its purity. Whereas few literary occurrences are better understood, than that it came down to us discoloured by "the variation of every soil" through which it had flowed, and that it stagnated at last in the muddy reservoir of the first folio.¹ In plainer terms, that the vitiations of a careless theatre were seconded by those of as ignorant a press. The integrity of dramas thus prepared for the world, is just on a level with the innocence of females nursed in a camp and educated in a bagnio.—As often therefore as we are told, that by admitting corrections warranted by

⁹ He died September 8th, 1797.

¹ It will perhaps be urged, that to this first folio we are indebted for the only copies of sixteen or seventeen of our author's plays: True: but may not our want of yet earlier and less corrupted editions of these very dramas be solely attributed to the monopolizing vigilance of its editors, Messieurs Hemings and Condell? Finding they had been deprived of some tragedies and comedies which, when opportunity offered, they designed to publish for their own emolument, they redoubled their solicitude to withhold the rest, and were but too successful in their precaution. "Thank fortune (says the original putterforth of *Troilus and Cressida*) for the scape it hath made amongst you; since by the *grand possessors'* wills, I believe, you should have pray'd for it, rather than beene pray'd."—Had quartos of *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *All's well that ends well*, &c. been sent into the world, from how many corruptions might the text of all these dramas have been secured!

common sense and the laws of the metre, we have not rigidly adhered to the text of Shakspeare, we shall entreat our opponents to exchange that phrase for another "more germane," and say instead of it, that we have deviated from the text of the publishers of single plays in quarto, or their successors, the editors of the first folio; that we have sometimes followed the suggestions of a Warburton, a Johnson, a Farmer, or a Tyrwhitt, in preference to the decisions of a Hemings or a Condell, notwithstanding their choice of readings might have been influenced by associates whose high-sounding names cannot fail to enforce respect, viz. William Ostler, John Shanke, William Sly, and Thomas Poope.²

To revive the anomalies, barbarisms and blunders of some ancient copies, in preference to the corrections of others almost equally old, is likewise a circumstance by no means honourable to our author, however secure respecting ourselves. For what is it, under pretence of restoration, but to use him as he has used the Tinker in *The Taming of a Shrew*,—to re-clothe him in his pristine rags? To assemble parallels in support of all these deformities, is no insuperable labour; for if we are permitted to avail ourselves of every typographical mistake, and every provincial vulgarism and offence against established grammar, that may be met with in the coëval productions of irregular humourists and ignorant sectaries and buffoons, we may aver that every casual combination of syllables may be tortured into meaning, and every species of corruption exemplified by corresponding depravities of language; but not of such lan-

² See first folio, &c. for the list of actors in our author's plays.

guage as Shakspeare, if compared with himself where he is perfect, can be supposed to have written. By similar reference it is that the style of many an ancient building has been characteristically restored. The members of architecture left entire, have instructed the renovator how to supply the loss of such as had fallen into decay. The poet, therefore, whose dialogue has often, during a long and uninterrupted series of lines, no other peculiarities than were common to the works of his most celebrated contemporaries, and whose general ease and sweetness of versification are hitherto unrivalled, ought not so often to be suspected of having produced ungrammatical nonsense, and such rough and defective numbers as would disgrace a village schoolboy in his first attempts at English poetry.—It may also be observed, that our author's earliest compositions, his Sonnets, &c. are wholly free from metrical imperfections.

The truth is, that from one extreme we have reached another. Our incautious predecessors, Rowe, Pope, Hanmer, and Warburton, were sometimes justly blamed for wanton and needless deviations from ancient copies; and we are afraid that censure will as equitably fall on some of us, for a revival of irregularities which have no reasonable sanction, and few champions but such as are excited by a fruitless ambition to defend certain posts and passes that had been supposed untenable. The "wine of collation," indeed, had long been "drawn," and little beside the "mere lees was left" for very modern editors "to brag of." It should, therefore, be remembered, that as judgment, without the aid of collation, might have insufficient materials to work on, so collation, divested of judgment, will be often worse than

thrown away, because it introduces obscurity instead of light. To render Shakspeare less intelligible by the recall of corrupt phraseology, is not, in our opinion, the surest way to extend his fame and multiply his readers; unless (like Curll the bookseller, when the Jews spoke Hebrew to him,) they happen to have most faith in what they least understand. Respecting our author, therefore, on some occasions, we cannot join in the prayer of Cordelia :—

“————— *Restoration* hang
“ Thy medicine on his lips !”

It is unlucky for him, perhaps, that between the interest of his readers and his editors a material difference should subsist. The former wish to meet with as few difficulties as possible, while the latter are tempted to seek them out, because they afford opportunities for explanatory criticism.

Omissions in our author's works are frequently suspected, and sometimes not without sufficient reason. Yet, in our opinion, they have suffered a more certain injury from interpolation; for almost as often as their measure is deranged, or redundant, some words, alike unnecessary to sense and the grammar of the age, may be discovered, and, in a thousand instances, might be expunged, without loss of a single idea meant to be expressed; a liberty which we have sometimes taken, though not (as it is hoped) without constant notice of it to the reader. Enough of this, however, has been already attempted, to show that more on the same plan might be done with safety.³—So far from under-

³ Sufficient instances of measure thus rendered defective, and in the present edition unamended, may be found in the three last Acts of *Hamlet*, and in *Othello*. The length of this prefatory advertisement has precluded their exemplification, which was

standing the power of an ellipsis, we may venture to affirm that the very name of this figure in rhetorick never reached the ears of our ancient editors. Having on this subject the support of Dr. Farmer's acknowledged judgment and experience, we shall not shrink from controversy with those who maintain a different opinion, and refuse to acquiesce in modern suggestions if opposed to the authority of quartos and folios, consigned to us by a set of people who were wholly uninstructed in the common forms of style, orthography, and punctuation.—We do not therefore hesitate to affirm, that a blind fidelity to the eldest printed copies, is on some occasions a confirmed treason against the sense, spirit, and versification of Shakspeare.

All these circumstances considered, it is time, instead of a timid and servile adherence to ancient copies, when (offending against sense and metre) they furnish no real help, that a future editor, well acquainted with the phraseology of our author's age, should be at liberty to restore some apparent meaning to his corrupted lines, and a decent flow to his obstructed versification. The latter (as already has been observed) may be frequently effected by the expulsion of useless and supernumerary syllables, and an occasional supply of such as might fortuitously have been omitted, notwithstanding the declaration of Hemings and Condell, whose fraudulent preface asserts that they have published our author's plays "as absolute in their numbers as he conceived them." Till somewhat resembling the process above suggested be authorized, the publick will ask in vain for a com-

here meant to have been given.—We wish, however, to impress the foregoing circumstance on the memory of the judicious reader.

modious and pleasant text of Shakspeare. Nothing will be lost to the world on account of the measure recommended, there being folios and quartos enough remaining for the use of antiquarian or critical travellers, to whom a jolt over a rugged pavement may be more delectable than an easy passage over a smooth one, though they both conduct to the same object.

To a reader unacquainted with the licenses of a theatre, the charge of more material interpolation than that of mere syllables, will appear to want support; and yet whole lines and passages in the following plays incur a very just suspicion of having originated from this practice, which continues even in the present improved state of our dramatick arrangements; for the propensity of modern performers to alter words, and occasionally introduce ideas incongruous with their author's plan, will not always escape detection. In such vagaries our comedians have been much too frequently indulged; but to the injudicious tragical interpolator no degree of favour should be shown, not even to a late Matilda, who, in Mr. Home's *Douglas* thought fit to change the obscure intimation with which her part should have concluded—

“ _____ such a son.

“ And such a husband, *make a woman bold.*—

into a plain avowal, that

“ _____ such a son,

“ And such a husband, *drive me to my fate.*”

Here we perceive that Fate, the old post-horse of tragedy, has been saddled to expedite intelligence which was meant to be delayed till the necessary moment of its disclosure. Nay, further: the

prompter's book being thus corrupted, on the first night of the revival of this beautiful and interesting play at Drury Lane, the same spurious nonsense was heard from the lips of Mrs. Siddons, lips, whose matchless powers should be sacred only to the task of animating the purest strains of dramatick poetry.—Many other instances of the same presumption might have been subjoined, had they not been withheld through tenderness to performers now upon the stage.—Similar interpolations, however, in the text of Shakspeare, can only be suspected, and therefore must remain unexpelled.

To other defects of our late editions may be subjoined, as not the least notorious, an exuberance of comment. Our situation has not unaptly resembled that of the fray in the first scene of *Romeo and Juliet*:

“ While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,
“ Came more and more, and fought on part and part:”

till, as Hamlet has observed, we are contending

“ _____ for a plot
“ Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause.”

Indulgence to the remarks of others, as well as partiality to our own; an ambition in each little Hercules to set up pillars, ascertaining how far he had travelled through the dreary wilds of black letter; and perhaps a reluctance or inability to decide between contradictory sentiments, have also occasioned the appearance of more annotations than were absolutely wanted, unless it be thought requisite that our author, like a Dauphin Classick, should be reduced to marginal prose for the use of children; that all his various readings (assembled by Mr. Capell) should be enumerated, the genealo-

gies of all his real personages deduced; and that as many of his plays as are founded on Roman or British history, should be attended by complete transcripts from their originals in Sir Thomas North's *Plutarch*, or the Chronicles of Hall and Holinshed.—These faults, indeed,—*si quid prodest delicta fateri*,—within half a century, (when the present race of voluminous criticks is extinct) cannot fail to be remedied by a judicious and frugal selection from the labours of us all. Nor is such an event to be deprecated even by ourselves; since we may be certain that some ivy of each individual's growth will still adhere to the parent oak, though not enough, as at present, to “hide the princely trunk, and suck the verdure out of it.”³—It may be feared too, should we persist in similar accumulations of extraneous matter, that the readers will at length be frightened away from Shakspeare, as the soldiers of Cato deserted their comrade when he became bloated with poison—*crescens fugere cadaver*. It is our opinion, in short, that every one who opens the page of an ancient English writer, should bring with him some knowledge; and yet he by whom a thousand minutiae remain to be learned, needs not to close our author's volume in despair, for his spirit and general drift are always obvious, though his language and allusions are occasionally obscure.

We may subjoin (alluding to our own practice as well as that of others) that they whose remarks are longest, and who seek the most frequent opportunities of introducing their names at the bottom of our author's pages, are not, on that account, the most estimable criticks. The art of writing notes, as Dr. Johnson has pleasantly observed in

³ *Tempest*.

his preface, is not of difficult attainment.⁴ Additional hundreds might therefore be supplied; for as often as a various reading, whether serviceable or not, is to be found, the discoverer can bestow an immediate reward on his own industry, by a display of his favourite signature. The same advantage may be gained by opportunities of appropriating to ourselves what was originally said by another person, and in another place.

Though our adoptions have been slightly mentioned already, our fourth impression of the Plays of Shakspeare must not issue into the world without particular and ample acknowledgements of the benefit it has derived from the labours of the last editor, whose attention, diligence, and spirit of enquiry, have very far exceeded those of the whole united phalanx of his predecessors.—His additions to our author's Life, his attempt to ascertain the Order in which his Plays were written, together with his account of our ancient Stage, &c. are here re-published; and every reader will concur in wishing that a gentleman who has produced such intelligent combinations from very few materials, had fortunately been possessed of more.

Of his notes on particular passages a great majority is here adopted. True it is, that on some points we fundamentally disagree; for instance, concerning his metamorphosis of monosyllables (like *burn*, *sworn*, *worn*, *here* and *there*, *arms*, and *charms*,) into dissyllables; his contraction of dissyllables (like *neither*, *rather*, *reason*, *lover*, &c.) into monosyllables; and his sentiments respecting the worth of the variations supplied by the second folio.—On the first of these contested matters we commit ourselves to the publick ear; on the

⁴ See also Addison's *Spectator*, No. 470.

second we must awhile solicit the reader's attention.

The following conjectural account of the publication of this second folio (about which no certainty can be obtained) perhaps is not very remote from truth.

When the predecessor of it appeared, some intelligent friend or admirer of Shakspeare might have observed its defects, and corrected many of them in its margin, from early manuscripts,⁵ or authentick information.

That such manuscripts should have remained, can excite no surprize. The good fortune that, till this present hour, has preserved the *Chester and Coventry Mysteries*, *Tancred and Gismund*⁶ as originally written, the ancient play of *Timon*, the *Witch* of Middleton, with several older as well as coëval dramas (exclusive of those in the Marquis of Lansdowne's library) might surely have befriended some of our author's copies in 1632, only sixteen years after his death.

That oral information concerning his works was still accessible, may with similar probability be inferred; as some of the original and most knowing performers in his different pieces were then alive (Lowin and Taylor, for instance); and it must be certain, that on the stage they never uttered such mutilated lines and unintelligible nonsense as was afterwards incorporated with their respective parts, in both the first quarto and folio editions.

The folio therefore of 1623, corrected from one

⁵ See Mr. Holt White's note on *Romeo and Juliet*, Vol. XX. p. 97, n. 5.

⁶ i. e. as acted before Queen Elizabeth in 1568. See Warton, Vol. III. p. 376, n. g.

or both the authorities above mentioned, we conceive to have been the basis of its successor in 1632.

At the same time, however, a fresh and abundant series of errors and omissions was created in the text of our author; the natural and certain consequence of every re-impression of a work which is not overseen by other eyes than those of its printer.

Nor is it at all improbable that the person who furnished the revision of the first folio, wrote a very obscure hand, and was much cramped for room, as the margin of this book is always narrow. Such being the case, he might often have been compelled to deal in abbreviations, which were sometimes imperfectly deciphered, and sometimes wholly misunderstood.

Mr. Malone, indeed, frequently points his artillery at a personage whom we cannot help regarding as a phantom; we mean the *Editor* of the second folio; for perhaps no such literary agent as an editor of a poetical work, unaccompanied by comments, was at that period to be found. This office, if any where, was vested in the printer, who transferred it to his compositors; and these worthies discharged their part of the trust with a proportionate mixture of ignorance and inattention. We do not wish to soften our expression; for some plays, like *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, and many books of superior consequence, like Fox's *Martyrs*, and the second edition of the *Chronicles* of Holinshed, &c. were carefully prepared for the publick eye by their immediate authors, or substitutes qualified for their undertaking.⁷ But about the year

⁷ Abraham Fleming supervised, corrected, and enlarged the second edition of Holinshed's *Chronicle*, in 1585.

1600, the era of total incorrectness commenced, and works of almost all kinds appeared with the disadvantage of more than their natural and inherent imperfections.

Such too, in these more enlightened days, when few compositors are unskilled in orthography and punctuation, would be the event, were complicated works of fancy submitted to no other superintendance than their own. More attentive and judicious artists than were employed on our present edition of Shakspeare, are, I believe, no where to be found; and yet had their proofs escaped correction from an editor, the text of our author in many places would have been materially changed. And as all these changes would have originated from attention for a moment relaxed, interrupted memory, a too hasty glance at the page before them, and other incidental causes, they could not have been recommended in preference to the variations of the second folio, which in several instances have been justly reprobated by the last editor of Shakspeare. What errors then might not have been expected, when compositors were wholly unlettered and careless, and a corrector of the press an officer unknown? To him who is inclined to dispute our grounds for this last assertion, we would recommend a perusal of the errata at the ends of multitudes of our ancient publications, where the reader's indulgence is entreated for "faults escaped on account of the author's distance from the press;" faults, indeed, which could not have occurred, had every printing-office, as at present, been furnished with a regular and literary superintendant of its productions.—How then can it be expected that printers who were often found unequal to the task of setting forth even a plain prose narrative, consisting of a few sheets, without blunders innumer-

able, should have done justice to a folio volume of dramattick dialogues in metre, which required a so much greater degree of accuracy?

But the worth of our contested volume also seems to be questioned, because the authority on which even such changes in it as are allowed to be judicious, is unknown. But if weight were granted to this argument, what support could be found for ancient Greek and Roman MSS. of various descriptions? The names of their transcribers are alike undiscovered; and yet their authority, when the readings they present are valuable, will seldom fail to be admitted.

Nay, further:—it is on all hands allowed, that what we style a younger and inferior MS. will occasionally correct the mistakes and supply the deficiencies of one of better note, and higher antiquity.—Why, therefore, should not a book printed in 1632 be allowed the merit of equal services to a predecessor in 1623?

Such also, let us add, were the sentiments of a gentleman whose name we cannot repeat without a sigh, which those who were acquainted with his value, will not suspect of insincerity: we mean our late excellent friend, Mr. Tyrwhitt. In his library was this second folio of our author's plays. He always stood forward as a determined advocate for its authority, on which, we believe, more than one of his emendations were formed. At least, we are certain that he never attempted any, before he had consulted it.

He was once, indeed, offered a large fragment of the first folio; but in a few days he returned it, with an assurance that he did not perceive any decided superiority it could boast over its immediate successor, as the metre, imperfect in the

elder, was often restored to regularity in the junior impression.

Mr. Malone, however, in his *Letter to Dr. Farmer*, has styled these necessary corrections such “as could not escape a person of the most ordinary capacity, who had been one month conversant with a printing-house;” a description mortifying enough to the present editors, who, after an acquaintance of many years with typographical mysteries, would be loath to weigh their own amendments against those which this second folio, with all its blunders, has displayed.

The same gentleman also (see his Preface, p. 410) speaks with some confidence of having *proved* his assertions relative to the worthlessness of this book. But how are these assertions proved? By exposing its errors (some of which nevertheless are of a very questionable shape) and by observing a careful silence about its deserts.* The latter surely should have been stated as well as the former. Otherwise, this proof will resemble the “ill-roasted egg” in *As you like it*, which was done only “on one side.”—If, in the mean time, some critical arithmetician can be found, who will impartially and intelligently ascertain by way of D^r and C^r the faults and merits of this book, and thereby prove the former to have been many, and the latter scarce any at all, we will most openly acknowledge our misapprehension, and subscribe (a circumstance of

* Thus (as one instance out of several that might be produced) when Mr. Malone, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, very judiciously restores the uncommon word—*ging*, and supports it by instances from *The New Inn* and *The Alchemist*, he forbears to mention that such also is the reading of the *second*, though not of the *first* folio. See Vol. V. p. 166, n. 5.

which we need not be ashamed) to the superior sagacity and judgment of Mr. Malone.

To conclude, though we are far from asserting that this republication, generally considered, is preferable to its original, we must still regard it as a valuable supplement to that work; and no stronger plea in its favour can be advanced, than the frequent use made of it by Mr. Malone. The numerous corrections from it admitted by that gentleman into his text,⁹ and pointed out in his

⁹ Amounting to (as we are informed by a very accurate compositor who undertook to count them) 186.

Instances wherein Mr. Malone has admitted the Corrections
of the *Second Folio*.

<i>Tempest</i>	4
<i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	10
<i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	5
<i>Measure for Measure</i>	15
<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	11
<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i>	0
<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>	13
<i>Midsummer-Night's Dream</i>	4
<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	2
<i>As you like it</i>	15
<i>Taming of the Shrew</i>	16
<i>All's well that ends well</i>	6
<i>Twelfth-Night</i>	3
<i>Winter's Tale</i>	8
<i>Macbeth</i>	6
<i>King John</i>	3
<i>King Richard II.</i>	1
<i>King Henry IV. Part I.</i>	1
II.	1
<i>King Henry V.</i>	7
<i>King Henry VI. Part I.</i>	6
II.	6
III.	2
<i>King Richard III.</i>	0

notes, will, in our judgment, contribute to its eulogium; at least cannot fail to rescue it from his prefatory imputations of—"being of no value whatever," and afterwards of—"not being worth—three shillings."¹ See Mr. Malone's Preface, and List of Editions of Shakspeare.

Our readers, it is hoped, will so far honour us as to observe, that the foregoing opinions were not suggested and defended through an ambitious spirit of contradiction. Mr. Malone's Preface, indeed, will absolve us from that censure; for he allows them to be of a date previous to his own edition. He, therefore, on this subject, is the

<i>King Henry VIII.</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	6
<i>Coriolanus</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0
<i>Julius Cæsar</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2
<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	7
<i>Timon of Athens</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	6
<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0
<i>Cymbeline</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	10
<i>King Lear</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	4
<i>Hamlet</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3
<i>Othello</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0
Total									186

PLYMSELL.

¹ This doctrine, however, appears to have made few proselytes: at least, some late catalogues of our good friends the booksellers, have expressed their dissent from it in terms of uncommon force. I must add, that on the 34th day of the auction of the late Dr. Farmer's library, this proscribed volume was sold for THREE GUINEAS; and that in the sale of Mr. Allen's library, April the 15th, 1799, at Leighand Sotheby's, York Street, Covent Garden, the four folio editions of our author's plays were disposed of at the following prices: the first folio £40 19 0, the second 5 10 0, the third 5 15 6, the fourth 3 13 6.—Since the time of the above-mentioned sales the folio editions have increased in value, and at the sale of the Duke of Roxburgh's library, June 6, 1812, produced the following prices; the first £100 0 0, the second 15 0 0, the third 35 0 0, the fourth 6 6 0.

HARRIS.

assailant, and not the conductors of the present republication.

But though, in the course of succeeding strictures, several other of Mr. Malone's positions may be likewise controverted, some with seriousness, and some with levity, (for our discussions are not of quite so solemn a turn as those which involve the interests of our country,) we feel an undissembled pleasure in avowing, that his remarks are at once so numerous and correct, that when criticism "has done its worst," their merit but in a small degree can be affected. We are confident, however, that he himself will hereafter join with us in considering no small proportion of our contested readings as a mere game at literary push-pin; and that if Shakspeare looks down upon our petty squabbles over his mangled scenes, it must be with feelings similar to those of Lucan's hero:

— *videtque sui ludibria trunci.*

In the Preface of Mr. Malone, indeed, a direct censure has been levelled at incorrectness in the text of the edition 1773. The justice of the imputation is unequivocally allowed; but, at the same time, might not this acknowledgement be seconded by somewhat like a retort? For is it certain that the collations, &c. of 1790 are wholly secure from similar charges? Are they accompanied by no unauthorized readings, no omission of words, and transpositions? Through all the plays, and especially those of which there is only a single copy, they have been with some diligence retraced, and the frailties of their collator, such as they are, have been ascertained. They shall not, however, be ostentatiously pointed out, and for this only reason:—That as they decrease but little, if at all, the

vigour of Shakspeare, the critick who in general has performed with accuracy one of the heaviest of literary tasks, ought not to be molested by a display of petty faults, which might have eluded the most vigilant faculties of sight and hearing that were ever placed as spies over the labours of each other. They are not even mentioned here as a covert mode of attack, or as a "note of preparation" for future hostilities. The office of "devising brave punishments" for faithless editors, is therefore strenuously declined, even though their guilt should equal that of one of their number, (Mr. Steevens,) who stands convicted of having given *winds* instead of *wind*, *stables* instead of *stable*, *sessions* instead of *session*, *sins* instead of *sin*, and (we shudder while we recite the accusation) *my* instead of *mine*.²

"————— Such small deer
" Have been our food for many a year ;"

so long, in truth, that any further pursuit of them is here renounced, together with all triumphs founded on the detection of harmless synonymous particles that accidentally may have deserted their proper places and wandered into others, without injury to Shakspeare.—A few chipped or disjointed stones will not impair the shape or endanger the stability of a pyramid. We are far from wishing to depreciate exactness, yet cannot persuade ourselves but that a single lucky conjecture or illustration, should outweigh a thousand spurious *haths* deposited in favour of legitimate *has's*, and the like insignificant recoveries, which may not too degradingly

* See Mr. Malone's Preface.

be termed—the haberdashery of criticism; that “stand in number, though in reckoning none;” and are as unimportant to the poet’s fame,

“As is the morn-dew on the myrtle-leaf
“To his grand sea.”

We shall venture also to assert, that, on a minute scrutiny, every editor, in his turn, may be charged with omission of some preferable reading; so that he who drags his predecessor to justice on this score, will have good luck if he escapes ungalled by recrimination.

If somewhat, therefore, in the succeeding volumes has been added to the correction and illustration of our author, the purpose of his present editors is completely answered. On any thing like perfection in their labours they do not presume, being too well convinced that, in defiance of their best efforts, their own incapacity, and that of the original quarto and folio-mongers, have still left sufficient work for a race of commentators who are yet unborn. *Nos*, (says Tully, in the second Book of his *Tusculan Questions*,) *qui sequimur probabilia, nec ultra quàm id quod verisimile occurrerit, progredi possumus; et refellere sine pertinacia, et refelli sine iracundia, parati sumus.*

Be it remembered also, that the assistants and adversaries of editors, enjoy one material advantage over editors themselves. They are at liberty to select their objects of remark:

————— *et quæ*
Desperant tractata nitescere posse, relinquunt.

The fate of the editor in form is less propitious.

He is expected to combat every difficulty from which his auxiliaries and opponents could secure an honourable retreat. It should not, therefore, be wondered at, if some of his enterprizes are unsuccessful.

Though the foregoing Advertisement has run out into an unpremeditated length, one circumstance remains to be mentioned.—The form and substance of the commentary attending this republication having been materially changed and enlarged since it first appeared, in compliance with ungrateful custom the name of its original editor might have been withdrawn: but Mr. *Steevens* could not prevail on himself to forego an additional opportunity of recording in a title-page that he had once the honour of being united in a task of literature with Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON. This is a distinction which malevolence cannot obscure, nor flattery transfer to any other candidate for publick favour.

It may possibly be expected, that a list of Errata should attend so voluminous a work as this, or that cancels should apologize for its more material inaccuracies. Neither of these measures, however, has in the present instance been adopted, and for reasons now submitted to the publick.

In regard to errata, it has been customary with not a few authors to acknowledge small mistakes,

that they might escape the suspicion of greater,³ or perhaps to intimate that no greater could be detected. Both little and great (and doubtless there may be the usual proportion of both) are here exposed (with very few exceptions) to the candour and perspicacity of the reader, who needs not to be told that in fifteen volumes octavo, of intricate and variegated printing, gone through in the space of about twenty months, the most vigilant eyes must occasionally have been overwatched, and the readiest knowledge intercepted. The sight of the editors, indeed, was too much fatigued to encourage their engagement in so laborious a revision; and they are likewise convinced that substitutes are not always qualified for their task; but instead of pointing out real mistakes, would have supposed the existence of such as were merely founded on their own want of acquaintance with the peculiarities of ancient spelling and language; for even modern poetry has sometimes been in danger from the chances of their superintendance. He whose business it is to offer this unusual apology, very well remembers to have been sitting with Dr. Johnson, when an agent from a neighbouring press brought in the proof sheet of a republication, requesting to know whether a particular word in it was not corrupted. "So far from it, Sir, (replied the Doctor, with some harshness,) that the word you suspect and would displace, is conspicuously beautiful where it stands, and is the only one that could have done the duty expected from it by Mr. Pope."

³ " — the hospitable door

" Expos'd a matron, to avoid worse rape."

Paradise Lost, B. I. v. 505.

As for cancels, it is in the power of every careless binder to defeat their purpose; for they are so seldom lodged with uniformity in their proper places, that they as often serve to render copies imperfect, as to screen an author from the charge of ignorance or inattention. The leaf appropriated to one volume, is sometimes shuffled into the corresponding page of another; and sometimes the faulty leaf is withdrawn, and no other substituted in its room. These circumstances might be exemplified; but the subject is scarcely of consequence enough to be more than generally stated to the reader, whose indulgence is again solicited on account of blemishes which in the course of an undertaking like this are unavoidable, and could not, at its conclusion, have been remedied but by the hazard of more extensive mischief;—an indulgence, indeed, that will more readily be granted, and especially for the sake of the compositors, when it is understood, that, on an average, every page of the present work, including spaces, quadrats, points, and letters, is (to speak technically) composed of 2680 distinct pieces of metal.⁴

⁴ Number of letters, &c. in a page of Shakspeare, 1793.

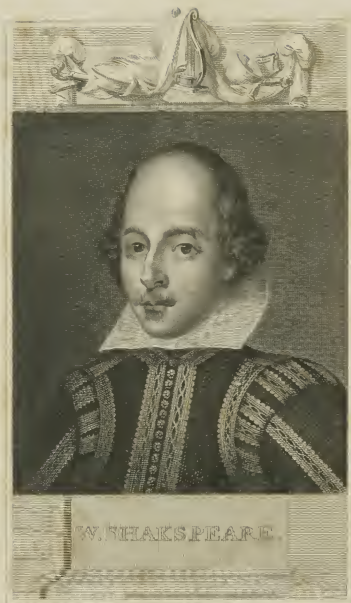
TEXT.	NOTES.														
<p>The average number in each line (including letters, points, spaces, &c.) is 47; the number of lines in a page—37.</p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">47</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">37</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">—</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">329</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">141</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">—</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">1739 in a page.</td></tr> </table>	47	37	—	329	141	—	1739 in a page.	<p>The average number in each line (including letters, points, spaces, &c.) is 67; the number of lines in a page—47.</p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">67</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">47</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">—</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">469</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">268</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">—</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">3149 in a page.</td></tr> </table>	67	47	—	469	268	—	3149 in a page.
47															
37															
—															
329															
141															
—															
1739 in a page.															
67															
47															
—															
469															
268															
—															
3149 in a page.															

From this calculation it is clear, that a common page, admitting it to consist of 1-3d text, and 2-3ds notes, contains

As was formerly therefore observed, he who waited till the river should run dry, did not act with less reason than the editors would do, who should suspend a voluminous and complicated publication, in the vain hope of rendering it absolutely free from literary and typographical errors.

about 2680 distinct pieces of metal; which multiplied by 16, the number of pages in a sheet, will amount to 42,880—the misplacing of any one of which would inevitably cause a blunder,

PLYMSELL.



Engraved by J. Flaxman from the Original Painted in the Possession of Mr. Richardson.

SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

WRITTEN BY MR. ROWE.

IT seems to be a kind of respect due to the memory of excellent men, especially of those whom their wit and learning have made famous, to deliver some account of themselves, as well as their works, to posterity. For this reason, how fond do we see some people of discovering any little personal story of the great men of antiquity! their families, the common accidents of their lives, and even their shape, make, and features, have been the subject of critical inquiries. How trifling soever this curiosity may seem to be, it is certainly very natural; and we are hardly satisfied with an account of any remarkable person, till we have heard him described even to the very clothes he wears. As for what relates to men of letters, the knowledge of an author may sometimes conduce to the better understanding his book; and though the works of Mr. Shakspeare may seem to many not to want a comment, yet I fancy some little ac-

count of the man himself may not be thought improper to go along with them.

He was the son of Mr. John Shakspeare, and was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire, in April, 1564. His family, as appears by the register and publick writings relating to that town, were of good figure and fashion there, and are mentioned as gentlemen. His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool,⁵ had so large a family, ten children

⁵ *His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool,*] It appears that he had been an officer and bailiff of Stratford-upon-Avon; and that he enjoyed some hereditary lands and tenements, the reward of his grandfather's faithful and approved services to King Henry VII. See the extract from the Herald's Office.

THEOBALD.

The chief Magistrate of the Body Corporate of Stratford, now distinguished by the title of Mayor, was in the early charters called the High Bailiff. This office Mr. John Shakspeare filled in 1569, as appears from the following extracts from the books of the corporation, with which I have been favoured by the Rev. Mr. Davenport, Vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon:

“ Jan. 10, in the 6th year of the reign of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth, John Shakspeare passed his Chamberlain's accounts.

“ At the Hall holden the eleventh day of September, in the eleventh year of the reign of our sovereign lady Elizabeth, 1569, were present Mr. John Shakspeare, High Bailiff.” [Then follow the names of the Aldermen and Burgesses.]

“ At the Hall holden Nov. 19th, in the 21st year of the reign of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth, it is ordained, that every Alderman shall be taxed to pay weekly 4d. saving *John Shakspeare* and Robert Bruce, who shall not be taxed to pay any thing; and every burgess to pay 2d.”

“ At the Hall holden on the 6th day of September, in the 28th year of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth.

“ At this Hall William Smith and Richard Courte are chosen to be Aldermen in the places of John Wheler, and John Shakspeare, for that Mr. Wheler doth desire to be put out of the company, and Mr. Shakspeare doth not come to the halls, when they be warned, nor hath not done of long time.”

From these extracts it may be collected, (as is observed by the gentleman above mentioned, to whose obliging attention to my

in all, that though he was his eldest son, he could give him no better education than his own employment. He had bred him, it is true, for some time at a free school,⁶ where, it is probable, he acquired what Latin he was master of: but the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forced his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency in that language. It is without controversy, that in his works we scarce find any traces of any thing that looks like an imitation of the ancients. The delicacy of his taste, and the natural bent of his own great genius, (equal, if not superior, to some of the best of theirs,) would certainly have led him to read and study them with so much pleasure, that some of their fine images would naturally have insinuated themselves into, and been mixed

inquiries I am indebted for many particulars relative to our poet's family,) that Mr. John Shakspeare in the former part of his life was in good circumstances, such persons being generally chosen into the corporation; and from his being excused [in 1579] to pay 4d. weekly, and at a subsequent period (1586) put out of the corporation, that he was then reduced in his circumstances.

It appears from a note to W. Dethick's Grant of Arms to him in 1596, now in the College of Arms, *Vincent*, Vol. 157, p. 24, that he was a justice of the peace, and possessed of lands and tenements to the amount of 500l.

Our poet's mother was the daughter and heir of Robert Arden of Wellingcote, in the county of Warwick, who, in the MS. above referred to, is called "a gentleman of worship." The family of *Arden* is a very ancient one; Robert Arden of Bromwich, Esq. being in the list of the gentry of this county, returned by the commissioners in the twelfth year of King Henry VI. A. D. 1433. Edward Arden was Sheriff to the county in 1568.—The woodland part of this county was anciently called *Ardern*; afterwards softened to *Arden*. Hence the name.

MALONE.

⁶ *He had bred him, it is true, for some time at a free-school,]*
The free-school, I presume, founded at Stratford. THEOBALD,

with his own writings; so that his not copying at least something from them, may be an argument of his never having read them. Whether his ignorance of the ancients were a disadvantage to him or no, may admit of a dispute: for though the knowledge of them might have made him more correct, yet it is not improbable but that the regularity and deference for them, which would have attended that correctness, might have restrained some of that fire, impetuosity, and even beautiful extravagance, which we admire in Shakspeare: and I believe we are better pleased with those thoughts, altogether new and uncommon, which his own imagination supplied him so abundantly with, than if he had given us the most beautiful passages out of the Greek and Latin poets, and that in the most agreeable manner that it was possible for a master of the English language to deliver them.

Upon his leaving school, he seems to have given entirely into that way of living which his father proposed to him;⁷ and in order to settle in the world after a family manner, he thought fit to marry while he was yet very young.⁸ His wife was

⁷ — *into that way of living which his father proposed to him;*] I believe, that on leaving school Shakspeare was placed in the office of some country attorney, or the seneschal of some manor court. See the *Essay on the Order of his Plays*, Article, *Hamlet*. MALONE.

⁸ — *he thought fit to marry while he was yet very young,*] It is certain he did so; for by the monument in Stratford church erected to the memory of his daughter, Susanna, the wife of John Hall, gentleman, it appears, that she died on the 2d of July, 1649, aged 66; so that she was born in 1583, when her father could not be full 19 years old. THEOBALD.

Susanna, who was our poet's eldest child, was baptized, May 26, 1583. Shakspeare therefore, having been born in April 1564, was nineteen the month preceding her birth. Mr.

the daughter of one Hathaway,⁹ said to have been a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford. In this kind of settlement he continued for some time, till an extravagance that he was guilty of forced him both out of his country, and that way of living which he had taken up; and though it seemed at first to be a blemish upon his good manners, and a misfortune to him, yet it afterwards happily proved the occasion of exerting one of the greatest *geniuses* that ever was known in dramattick poetry. He had by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company, and amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge that ill usage, he made a ballad upon him.¹ And though this, probably the first essay

Theobald was mistaken in supposing that a *monument* was erected to her in the church of Stratford. There is no memorial there in honour of either our poet's wife or daughter, except flat tomb-stones, by which, however, the time of their respective deaths is ascertained.—His daughter, Susanna, died, not on the *second*, but the *eleventh* of July, 1649. Theobald was led into this error by Dugdale. MALONE.

⁹ *His wife was the daughter of one Hathaway,*] She was eight years older than her husband, and died in 1623, at the age of 67 years. THEOBALD.

The following is the inscription on her tomb-stone in the church of Stratford:

“ Here lyeth interred the body of ANNE, wife of William Shakespear, who departed this life the 6th day of August, 1623, being of the age of 67 years.”

After this inscription follow six Latin verses, not worth preserving. MALONE.

¹ — *in order to revenge that ill usage, he made a ballad upon him.*] Mr. William Oldys, (Norroy King at Arms, and

of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the prosecution

well known from the share he had in compiling the *Biographia Britannica*) among the collections which he left for a *Life of Shakspeare*, observes, that “—there was a very aged gentleman living in the neighbourhood of Stratford, (where he died fifty years since) who had not only heard, from several old people in that town, of Shakspeare’s transgression, but could remember the first stanza of that bitter ballad, which, repeating to one of his acquaintance, he preserved it in writing; and here it is neither better nor worse, but faithfully transcribed from the copy which his relation very courteously communicated to me:”

“ A parlicemente member, a justice of peace,
 “ At home a poor scare-crowe, at London an asse,
 “ If lowsie is Lucy, as some volke miscalle it,
 “ Then Lucy is lowsie whatever befall it:
 “ He thinks himself greate,
 “ Yet an asse in his state
 “ We allowe by his ears but with asses to mate.
 “ If Lucy is lowsie, as some volke miscalle it,
 “ Sing lowsie Lucy, whatever befall it.”

Contemptible as this performance must now appear, at the time when it was written it might have had sufficient power to irritate a vain, weak, and vindictive magistrate; especially as it was affixed to several of his park-gates, and consequently published among his neighbours.—It may be remarked likewise, that the jingle on which it turns, occurs in the first scene of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

I may add, that the veracity of the late Mr. Oldys has never yet been impeached; and it is not very probable that a ballad should be forged, from which an undiscovered wag could derive no triumph over antiquarian credulity. STEEVENS.

According to Mr. Capell, this ballad came originally from Mr. Thomas Jones, who lived at Tarbick, a village in Worcester-shire, about 18 miles from Stratford-upon-Avon, and died in 1703, aged upwards of ninety. “He remembered to have heard from several old people at Stratford the story of Shakspeare’s robbing Sir Thomas Lucy’s park; and their account of it agreed with Mr. Rowe’s, with this addition, that the ballad written against Sir Thomas Lucy by Shakspeare was stuck upon his park-gate, which exasperated the knight to apply to a lawyer at Warwick to proceed against him. Mr. Jones (it is added) put down in writing the first stanza of this ballad, which was all he

against him to that degree, that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire, for some time, and shelter himself in London.

It is at this time, and upon this accident, that he is said to have made his first acquaintance in the playhouse. He was received into the company then in being, at first in a very mean rank,² but his ad-

remembred of it." In a note on the transcript with which Mr. Capell was furnished, it is said, that "the people of those parts pronounce *lowsie* like *Lucy*." They do so to this day in Scotland. Mr. Wilkes, grandson of the gentleman to whom Mr. Jones repeated the stanza, appears to have been the person who gave a copy of it to Mr. Oldys, and Mr. Capell.

In a manuscript *History of the Stage*, full of forgeries and falsehoods of various kinds written (I suspect by William Chtwood the prompter) some time between April 1727 and October 1730, is the following passage, to which the reader will give just as much credit as he thinks fit:

"Here we shall observe, that the learned Mr. Joshua Barnes, late Greek Professor of the University of Cambridge, baiting about forty years ago at an inn in Stratford, and hearing an old woman singing part of the above-said song, such was his respect for Mr. Shakspeare's genius, that he gave her a newgown for the two following stanzas in it; and, could she have said it all, he would (as he often said in company, when any discourse has casually arose about him) have given her ten guineas:

- " Sir Thomas was too covetous,
 " To covet so much deer,
 " When horns enough upon his head,
 " Most plainly did appear.
 " Had not his worship one deer left?
 " What then? He had a wife
 " Took pains enough to find him horns
 " Should last him during life." MALONE.

² He was received into the company—at first in a very mean rank;] There is a stage tradition, that his first office in the theatre was that of *Call-boy*, or prompter's attendant; whose employment it is to give the performers notice to be ready to enter, as often as the business of the play requires their appearance on the stage. MALONE.

mirable wit, and the natural turn of it to the stage, soon distinguished him, if not as an extraordinary actor, yet as an excellent writer. His name is printed, as the custom was in those times, amongst those of the other players, before some old plays, but without any particular account of what sort of parts he used to play; and though I have inquired, I could never meet with any further account of him this way, than that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own *Hamlet*.³ I should have been much more pleased, to have learned from certain authority, which was the first play he wrote;⁴ it would be without doubt a pleasure to any man, curious in things of this kind, to see and know what was the first essay of a fancy like Shakspeare's. Perhaps we are not to look for his beginnings, like those of other authors, among their least perfect writings; art had so little, and nature so large a share in what he did, that, for aught I know, the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, and had the most fire and strength of imagination in them, were the best.⁵ I would not

³ — *than that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own Hamlet.*] See such notices as I have been able to collect on this subject, in the List of old English actors, *post*.

MALONE.

⁴ — *to have learned from certain authority, which was the first play he wrote;*] The highest date of any I can yet find, is *Romeo and Juliet* in 1597, when the author was 33 years old; and *Richard the Second, and Third*, in the next year, viz. the 34th of his age. POPE.

Richard II. and III. were both printed in 1597.—On the order of time in which Shakspeare's plays were written, see the Essay in the next volume. MALONE.

⁵ — *for aught I know, the performances of his youth—were the best.*] See this notion controverted in *An Attempt to ascertain the Order of Shakspeare's Plays*. MALONE.

be thought by this to mean, that his fancy was so loose and extravagant, as to be independent on the rule and government of judgment; but that what he thought was commonly so great, so justly and rightly conceived in itself, that it wanted little or no correction, and was immediately approved by an impartial judgment at the first sight. But though the order of time in which the several pieces were written be generally uncertain, yet there are passages in some few of them which seem to fix their dates. So the *Chorus* at the end of the fourth act of *Henry the Fifth*, by a compliment very handsomely turned to the Earl of Essex, shows the play to have been written when that lord was general for the Queen in Ireland; and his elogy upon Queen Elizabeth, and her successor King James, in the latter end of his *Henry the Eighth*, is a proof of that play's being written after the accession of the latter of these two princes to the crown of England. Whatever the particular times of his writing were, the people of his age, who began to grow wonderfully fond of diversions of this kind, could not but be highly pleased to see a genius arise amongst them of so pleasurable, so rich a vein, and so plentifully capable of furnishing their favourite entertainments. Besides the advantages of his wit, he was in himself a good-natured man, of great sweetness in his manners, and a most agreeable companion; so that it is no wonder, if, with so many good qualities, he made himself acquainted with the best conversations of those times. Queen Elizabeth had several of his plays acted before her, and without doubt gave him many gracious marks of her favour: it is that maiden princess plainly, whom he intends by

“ — a fair vestal, throned by the west.”

A Midsummer-Night's Dream.

and that whole passage is a compliment very properly brought in, and very handsomely applied to her. She was so well pleased with that admirable character of Falstaff, in *The Two Parts of Henry the Fourth*, that she commanded him to continue it for one play more,⁶ and to show him in love. This is said to be the occasion of his writing *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. How well she was obeyed, the play itself is an admirable proof. Upon this occasion it may not be improper to observe, that this part of Falstaff is said to have been written originally under the name of *Oldcastle*:⁷ some of that family being then remaining, the Queen was pleased to command him to alter it; upon which he made use of Falstaff. The present offence was indeed avoided; but I do not know whether the author may not have been somewhat to blame in his second choice, since it is certain that Sir John Falstaff, who was a knight of the garter, and a lieutenant-general, was a name of distinguished merit in the wars in France in Henry the Fifth's and Henry the Sixth's times. What grace soever the Queen conferred upon him, it was not to her only he owed the fortune which the reputation of

⁶ — she commanded him to continue it for one play more,] This anecdote was first given to the publick by Dennis, in the *Epistle Dedicatory* to his comedy entitled *The Comical Gallant*, Ato. 1702, altered from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

MALONE.

⁷ — this part of Falstaff is said to have been written originally under the name of Oldcastle;] See the Epilogue to *Henry the Fourth*. POPE.

In a note subjoined to that Epilogue, and more fully in Vol. XI. p. 194. n. 3, the reader will find this notion overturned, and the origin of this vulgar error pointed out. Mr. Rowe was evidently deceived by a passage in Fuller's *Worthies*, misunderstood.

MALONE.

his wit made. He had the honour to meet with many great and uncommon marks of favour and friendship from the Earl of Southampton,⁸ famous in the histories of that time for his friendship to the unfortunate Earl of Essex. It was to that noble lord that he dedicated his poem of *Venus and Adonis*.⁹ There is one instance so singular in the magnificence of this patron of Shakspeare's, that if I had not been assured that the story was handed down by Sir William D'Avenant, who was probably very well acquainted with his affairs, I should not have ventured to have inserted; that my Lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand pounds, to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to. A bounty very great, and very rare at any time, and almost equal to that profuse generosity the present age has shown to French dancers and Italian singers.

What particular habitude or friendships he contracted with private men, I have not been able to learn, more than that every one, who had a true taste of merit, and could distinguish men, had generally a just value and esteem for him. His exceeding candour and good-nature must certainly have inclined all the gentler part of the world to love him, as the power of his wit obliged the men of the most delicate knowledge and polite learning to admire him.

His acquaintance with Ben Jonson began with a

⁸ — from the *Earl of Southampton*,] Of this amiable nobleman such memoirs as I have been able to collect, may be found in the tenth volume, [i. e. of Mr. Malone's edition] prefixed to the poem of *Venus and Adonis*. MALONE.

⁹ — he dedicated his poem of *Venus and Adonis*,] To this nobleman also he dedicated his *Rape of Lucrece*, printed in 4to. in 1594. MALONE.

remarkable piece of humanity and good-nature; Mr. Jonson, who was at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offered one of his plays to the players, in order to have it acted; and the persons into whose hands it was put, after having turned it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an ill-natured answer, that it would be of no service to their company; when Shakspeare luckily cast his eye upon it, and found something so well in it, as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. Jonson and his writings to the publick.¹

¹ ——— to recommend Mr. Jonson and his writings to the publick.] In Mr. Rowe's first edition, after these words was inserted the following passage:

“ After this, they were professed friends; though I do not know whether the other ever made him an equal return of gentleness and sincerity. Ben was naturally proud and insolent, and in the days of his reputation did so far take upon him the supremacy in wit, that he could not but look with an evil eye upon any one that seemed to stand in competition with him. And if at times he has affected to commend him, it has always been with some reserve; insinuating his uncorrectness, a careless manner of writing, and want of judgment. The praise of seldom altering or blotting out what he writ, which was given him by the players, who were the first publishers of his works after his death, was what Jonson could not bear: he thought it impossible, perhaps, for another man to strike out the greatest thoughts in the finest expression, and to reach those excellencies of poetry with the ease of a first imagination, which himself with infinite labour and study could but hardly attain to.”

I have preserved this passage because I believe it strictly true, except that in the last line, instead of *but hardly*, I would read — *never*.

Dryden, we are told by Pope, concurred with Mr. Rowe in thinking Jonson's posthumous verses on our author *sparing* and *invidious*.—See also Mr. Stevens's note on those verses.

Before Shakspeare's death Ben's envious disposition is mentioned by one of his own friends; it must therefore have been even then notorious; though the writer denies the truth of the charge:

Jonson was certainly a very good scholar, and in that had the advantage of Shakspeare; though at

“ To my well accomplish'd friend, Mr. Ben. Jonson.

“ Thou art sound in body; but some say, thy soule

“ *Envy doth ulcer; yet corrupted hearts*

“ Such censurers must have.”

Scourge of Folly, by J. Davies, printed about 1611.

The following lines by one of Jonson's admirers will sufficiently support Mr. Rowe in what he has said relative to the slowness of that writer in his compositions:

“ Scorn then their censures who gave out, thy wit

“ As long upon a comedy did sit

“ As elephants bring forth, and that thy blots

“ And mendings took more time than FORTUNE-PLOTS;

“ That such thy drought was, and so great thy thirst,

“ That all thy plays were drawn at the *Mermaid* first;

“ That the king's yearly butt wrote, and his wine

“ Hath more right than thou to thy *Catiline*.”

The writer does not deny the charge, but vindicates his friend by saying that, however slow,—

“ He that writes well, writes quick—.”

Verses on B. Jonson, by Jasper Mayne.

So also, another of his Panegyrists:

“ Admit his muse was slow, 'tis judgment's fate

“ To move like greatest princes, still in state.”

In *The Return from Parnassus*, 1606, Jonson is said to be “ so slow an enditer, that he were better betake himself to his old trade of bricklaying.” The same piece furnishes us with the earliest intimation of the quarrel between him and Shakspeare: “ Why here's our fellow Shakspeare put them [the university poets] all down, ay, and Ben Jonson too. O, that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow; he brought up Horace giving the poets a pill, but our fellow Shakspeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit.” Fuller, who was a diligent inquirer, and lived near enough the time to be well informed, confirms this account, asserting in his *Worthies*, 1662, that “ many were the wit-combats” between Jonson and our poet.

It is a singular circumstance that old Ben should for near two centuries have stalked on the stilts of an artificial reputation; and that even at this day, of the very few who read his works, scarcely one in ten yet ventures to confess how little entertainment they afford. Such was the impression made on the publick by the extravagant praises of those who knew more of books than

the same time I believe it must be allowed, that what nature gave the latter, was more than a ba-

of the drama, that Dryden in his *Essay on Dramatick Poesie*, written about 1657, does not venture to go further in his eulogium on Shakspeare, than by saying, "he was at least *Jonson's equal*, if not his superior;" and in the preface to his *Mock Astrologer*, 1671, he hardly dares to assert, what, in my opinion, cannot be denied, that "all Jonson's pieces, except three or four, are but *crambe bis cocta*; the same humours a little varied, and written worse."

Ben, however, did not trust to the praise of others. One of his admirers honestly confesses,—

"——— he

"Of whom I write this, has prevented me,

"And boldly said so much in his own praise,

"No other pen need any trophy raise."

In vain, however, did he endeavour to bully the town into approbation by telling his auditors, "By G— 'tis good, and if you like't, you may;" and by pouring out against those who preferred our poet to him, a torrent of illiberal abuse; which, as Mr. Walpole justly observes, some of his contemporaries were willing to think wit, because they were afraid of it; for, notwithstanding all his arrogant boasts, notwithstanding all the clamour of his partizans both in his own life-time and for sixty years after his death, the truth is, that his pieces, when first performed, were so far from being applauded by the people, that they were scarcely endured; and many of them were actually *damned*.

"—— the fine plush and velvets of the age

"Did oft for sixpence *damu thee* from the stage,"—

says one of his eulogists in *Jonsonius Virbius*, 4to. 1638. Jonson himself owns that *Sejanus* was damned. "It is a poem," says he, in his Dedication to Lord Aubigny, "that, if I well remember, in your lordship's sight suffered no less violence from our people here, than the subject of it did from the rage of the people of Rome." His friend E. B. (probably Edmund Bolton) speaking of the same performance, says,—

"But when I view'd the people's beastly rage,

"Bent to confound thy grave and learned toil,

"That cost thee so much sweat and so much oil,

"My indignation I could hardly assuage."

Again, in his Dedication of *Catiline* to the Earl of Pembroke, the author says, "Posterity may pay your benefit the honour and

lance for what books had given the former; and the judgment of a great man upon this occasion was, I think, very just and proper. In a conversation between Sir John Suckling, Sir William D'Avenant, Endymion Porter, Mr. Hales of Eton, and Ben Jonson, Sir John Suckling, who was a professed admirer of Shakspeare, had undertaken his defence against Ben Jonson with some warmth; Mr. Hales, who had sat still for some time, told them,² *That if Mr. Shakspeare had not read the ancients, he had likewise not stolen any thing from them; and that if he would produce any one topick finely treated by any one of them, he would undertake to show some-*

thanks, when it shall know that you dare in these jig-given times to countenance a legitimate poem. I must call it so, *against all noise of opinion*, from whose crude and ayrie reports I appeal to that great and singular facultie of judgment in your lordship."

See also the Epilogue to *Every Man in his Humour*, by Lord Buckhurst, quoted below in *The Account of our old English Theatres, ad finem*. To his testimony and that of Mr. Drummond of Hawthornden, (there also mentioned,) may be added that of Leonard Digges in his Verses on Shakspeare, and of Sir Robert Howard, who says in the preface to his Plays, folio, 1665, (not thirty years after Ben's death,) "When I consider how severe the former age has been to some of the *best* of Mr. Jonson's never-to-be-equalled comedies, I cannot but wonder, why any poet should speak of former times." The truth is, that however extravagant the elogiums were that a few scholars gave him in their closets, he was not only not admired in his own time by the generality, but not even understood. His friend Beaumont assures him in a copy of verses, that "his sense is so deep that he will not be understood for three ages to come." MALONE.

² Mr. Hales, *who had sat still for some time, told them,*] In Mr. Rowe's first edition this passage runs thus:

"Mr. Hales, who had sat still for some time, *hearing Ben frequently reproach him with the want of learning and ignorance of the antients*, told him at last, *That if Mr. Shakspeare,*" &c. By the alteration, the subsequent part of the sentence—"if he would produce," &c. is rendered ungrammatical.

MALONE.

*thing upon the same subject at least as well written by Shakspeare.*³

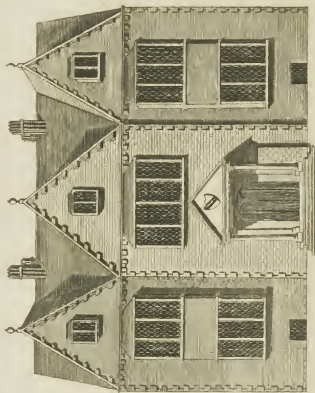
³ — he would undertake to show something upon the same subject at least as well written by Shakspeare.] I had long endeavoured in vain to find out on what authority this relation was founded; and have very lately discovered that Mr. Rowe probably derived his information from Dryden: for in Gildon's *Letters and Essays*, published in 1694, fifteen years before this Life appeared, the same story is told; and Dryden, to whom an Essay in vindication of Shakspeare is addressed, is appealed to by the writer as his authority. As Gildon tells the story with some slight variations from the account given by Mr. Rowe, and the book in which it is found is now extremely scarce, I shall subjoin the passage in his own words:

“But to give the world some satisfaction that Shakspeare has had as great veneration paid his excellence by men of unquestioned parts, as this I now express for him, I shall give some account of what I have heard *from your mouth*, sir, about the noble triumph he gained over all the ancients, by the judgment of the ablest critics of that time.

“The matter of fact, if my memory fail me not, was this. Mr. Hales of Eton affirmed, that he would show all the poets of antiquity out-done by Shakspeare, in all the topicks and common-places made use of in poetry. The enemies of Shakspeare would by no means yield him so much excellence; so that it came to a resolution of a trial of skill upon that subject. The place agreed on for the dispute was Mr. Hales's chamber at Eton. A great many books were sent down by the enemies of this poet; and on the appointed day my Lord Falkland, Sir John Suckling, and all the persons of quality that had wit and learning, and interested themselves in the quarrel, met there; and upon a thorough disquisition of the point, the judges chosen by agreement out of this learned and ingenious assembly, unanimously gave the preference to Shakspeare, and the Greek and Roman poets were adjudged to vail at least their glory in that, to the English Hero.”

This eulogium on our author is likewise recorded at an earlier period by Tate, probably from the same authority, in the preface to *The Loyal General*, quarto, 1680: “Our learned Hales was wont to assert, that, since the time of Orpheus, and the oldest poets, no common-place has been touched upon, where our author has not performed as well.”

Dryden himself also certainly alludes to this story, which he appears to have related both to Gildon and Rowe, in the follow-



J. Borell sc.

NEW PLATE,

*from a drawing in the Margin of an ancient survey, made by Order of SIR GEORGE CAREW,
Governour of the Countie of Devon, in the year 1578.*

The latter part of his life was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends. He had the good fortune to gather an estate equal to his occasion,⁴ and, in that, to his wish; and is said

ing passage of his *Essay of Dramatick Poesy*, 1667; and he as well as Gildon goes somewhat further than Rowe in his panegyrick. After giving that fine character of our poet which Dr. Johnson has quoted in his preface, he adds, "The consideration of this made Mr. Hales of Eton say, *that there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it MUCH BETTER done by Shakspeare*; and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him, Fletcher and Jonson, never equalled them to him in their esteem: And in the last king's court [that of Charles I.] when Ben's reputation was at highest, Sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers, set our Shakspeare far above him."

Let ever-memorable Hales, if all his other merits be forgotten, be ever mentioned with honour, for his good taste and admiration of our poet. "He was," says Lord Clarendon, "one of the least men in the kingdom; and one of the greatest scholars in Europe." See a long character of him in Clarendon's *Life*, Vol. I. p. 52. MALONE.

⁴ *He had the good fortune to gather an estate equal to his occasion,*] Gildon, without authority, I believe, says, that our author left behind him an estate of 300l. per ann. This was equal to at least 1000l. per ann. at this day; the relative value of money, the mode of living in that age, the luxury and taxes of the present time, and various other circumstances, being considered. But I doubt whether all his property amounted to much more than 200l. per ann. which yet was a considerable fortune in those times. He appears from his grand-daughter's will to have possessed in Bishopton, and Stratford Welcombe, four yard land and a half. *A yard land* is a denomination well known in Warwickshire, and contains from 30 to 60 acres. The average therefore being 45, four yard land and a half may be estimated at about two hundred acres. As sixteen years purchase was the common rate at which the land was sold at that time, that is, one half less than at this day, we may suppose that these lands were let at seven shillings per acre, and produced 70l. per annum. If we rate the *New-Place* with the appurtenances, and our poet's othe

to have spent some years before his death at his native Stratford.⁵ His pleasurable wit and good-

houses in Stratford, at 60*l.* a year, and his house, &c. in the Blackfriars, (for which he paid 140*l.*) at 20*l.* a year, we have a rent-roll of 150*l.* per annum. Of his personal property it is not now possible to form any accurate estimate: but if we rate it at five hundred pounds, money then bearing an interest of ten per cent. Shakspeare's total income was 200*l.* per ann.* In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which was written soon after the year 1600, *three hundred pounds a year* is described as an estate of such magnitude as to cover all the defects of its possessor:

“ O, what a world of vile ill-favour'd faults
“ Look handsome in three hundred pounds a year.”

MALONE.

⁵ — *to have spent some years before his death at his native Stratford.*] In 1614 the greater part of the town of Stratford was consumed by fire; but our Shakspeare's house, among some others, escaped the flames. This house was first built by Sir Hugh Clopton, a younger brother of an ancient family in that neighbourhood. Sir Hugh was Sheriff of London in the reign of Richard III. and Lord Mayor in the reign of King Henry VII. By his will he bequeathed to his elder brother's son his manor of Clopton, &c. and his house, by the name of the Great House in Stratford. Good part of the estate is yet [in 1733] in the possession of Edward Clopton, Esq. and Sir Hugh Clopton, Knt. lineally descended from the elder brother of the first Sir Hugh.

The estate had now been sold out of the Clopton family for above a century, at the time when Shakspeare became the purchaser: who having repaired and modelled it to his own mind, changed the name to *New-Place*, which the mansion-house, since erected upon the same spot, at this day retains. The house, and lands which attended it, continued in Shakspeare's descendants to the time of the Restoration; when they were re-purchased by the Clopton family, and the mansion now belongs to Sir Hugh Clopton, Knt. To the favour of this worthy gentleman I owe the knowledge of one particular in honour of our poet's once dwelling-house, of which I presume Mr. Rowe never was apprized. When the Civil War raged in England, and King

* To Shakspeare's income from his real and personal property must be added 200*l.* per ann. which he probably derived from the theatre, while he continued on the stage.

nature engaged him in the acquaintance, and entitled him to the friendship, of the gentlemen of

Charles the First's Queen was driven by the necessity of her affairs to make a recess in Warwickshire, she kept her court for three weeks in New-Place. We may reasonably suppose it then the best private house in the town; and her Majesty preferred it to the College, which was in the possession of the Combe family, who did not so strongly favour the King's party. THEOBALD.

From Mr. Theobald's words the reader may be led to suppose that Henrietta Maria was obliged to take refuge from the rebels in Stratford-upon-Avon: but that was not the case. She marched from Newark, June 16, 1643, and entered Stratford-upon-Avon triumphantly, about the 22d of the same month, at the head of three thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, with 150 waggons and a train of artillery. Here she was met by Prince Rupert, accompanied by a large body of troops. After sojourning about three weeks at our poet's house, which was then possessed by his grand-daughter Mrs. Nash, and her husband, the Queen went (July 13) to the plain of Keinton under Edge-hill, to meet the King, and proceeded from thence with him to Oxford, where, says a contemporary historian, "her coming (July 15) was rather to a triumph than a war."

Of the College above mentioned the following was the origin. John de Stratford, Bishop of Winchester, in the fifth year of King Edward III. founded a Chantry consisting of five priests, one of whom was Warden, in a certain chapel adjoining to the church of Stratford on the south side; and afterwards (in the seventh year of Henry VIII.) Ralph Collingwode instituted four choristers, to be daily assistant in the celebration of divine service there. This chantry, says Dugdale, soon after its foundation, was known by the name of *The College* of Stratford-upon-Avon.

In the 26th year of Edward III. "a house of square stone" was built by Ralph de Stratford, Bishop of London, for the habitation of the five priests. This house, or another on the same spot, is the house of which Mr. Theobald speaks. It still bears the name of "The College," and at present belongs to the Rev. Mr. Fullerton.

After the suppression of religious houses, the site of the college was granted by Edward VI. to John Earl of Warwick and his heirs; who being attainted in the first year of Queen Mary, it reverted to the crown.

Sir John Clopton, Knt. (the father of Edward Clopton, Esq. and Sir Hugh Clopton,) who died at Stratford-upon-Avon in

the neighbourhood. Amongst them, it is a story almost still remembered in that country that he

April, 1719, purchased the estate of New-Place, &c. some time after the year 1685, from Sir Reginald Forster, Bart. who married Mary, the daughter of Edward Nash, Esq. cousin-german to Thomas Nash, Esq. who married our poet's grand-daughter, Elizabeth Hall. Edward Nash bought it, after the death of her second husband, Sir John Barnard, Knight. By her will, which will be found in a subsequent page, she directed her trustee, Henry Smith, to sell the New-Place, &c. (after the death of her husband,) and to make the first offer of it to her cousin Edward Nash, who purchased it accordingly. His son Thomas Nash, whom for the sake of distinction I shall call the younger, having died without issue, in August, 1652, Edward Nash by his will, made on the 16th of March, 1678-9, devised the principal part of his property to his daughter Mary, and her husband Reginald Forster, Esq. afterwards Sir Reginald Forster; but in consequence of the testator's only referring to a deed of settlement executed three days before, without reciting the substance of it, no particular mention of New-Place is made in his will. After Sir John Clopton had bought it from Sir Reginald Forster, he gave it by deed to his younger son, Sir Hugh, who pulled down our poet's house, and built one more elegant on the same spot.

In May, 1742, when Mr. Garrick, Mr. Macklin, and Mr. Delane visited Stratford, they were hospitably entertained under Shakspeare's mulberry-tree, by Sir Hugh Clopton. He was a barrister at law, was knighted by George the First, and died in the 80th year of his age, in Dec. 1751. His nephew, Edward Clopton, the son of his elder brother Edward, lived till June, 1753.

The only remaining person of the Clopton family now living (1788), as I am informed by the Rev. Mr. Davenport, is Mrs. Partheriche, daughter and heiress of the second Edward Clopton above mentioned. "She resides," he adds, "at the family mansion at Clopton near Stratford, is now a widow, and never had any issue."

The New Place was sold by Henry Talbot, Esq. son-in-law and executor of Sir Hugh Clopton, in or soon after the year 1752, to the Rev. Mr. Gastrell, a man of large fortune, who resided in it but a few years, in consequence of a disagreement with the inhabitants of Stratford. Every house in that town that is let or valued at more than 40s. a year, is assessed by the overseers, according to its worth and the ability of the occupier,

had a particular intimacy with Mr. Combe,⁶ an old gentleman noted thereabouts for his wealth and

to pay a monthly rate toward the maintenance of the poor. As Mr. Gastrell resided part of the year at Lichfield, he thought he was assessed too highly; but being very properly compelled by the magistrates of Stratford to pay the whole of what was levied on him, on the principle that his house was occupied by his servants in his absence, he peevishly declared, that *that* house should never be assessed again; and soon afterwards pulled it down, sold the materials, and left the town. Wishing, as it should seem, to be "damn'd to everlasting fame," he had some time before cut down Shakspeare's celebrated mulberry-tree, to save himself the trouble of showing it to those whose admiration of our great poet led them to visit the poetick ground on which it stood.

That Shakspeare planted this tree, is as well authenticated as any thing of that nature can be. The Rev. Mr. Davenport informs me, that Mr. Hugh Taylor, (the father of his clerk,) who is now eighty-five years old, and an alderman of Warwick, where he at present resides, says, he lived when a boy at the next house to New-Place; that his family had inhabited the house for almost three hundred years; that it was transmitted from father to son during the last and the present century; that this tree (of the fruit of which he had often eaten in his younger days, some of its branches hanging over his father's garden,) was planted by Shakspeare; and that till this was planted, there was no mulberry-tree in that neighbourhood. Mr. Taylor adds, that he was frequently, when a boy, at New-Place, and that this tradition was preserved in the Clopton family, as well as in his own.

There were scarce any trees of this species in England till the year 1609, when by order of King James many hundred thousand young mulberry-trees were imported from France, and sent into the different counties, with a view to the feeding of silkworms, and the encouragement of the silk manufacture. See *Camdeni Annales ab anno 1603 ad annum 1623*, published by Smith, quarto, 1691, p. 7; and Howes's *Abridgment of Stowe's Chronicle*, edit. 1618, p. 503, where we have a more particular account of this transaction than in the larger work. A very few mulberry-trees had been planted before; for we are told, that in the preceding year a gentleman of Picardy, Monsieur Forest, "kept greate store of English silkworms at Greenwich, the which the king with great pleasure came often to see them worke; and of their silke he caused a *piece of taffata* to be made."

usury: it happened, that in a pleasant conversation amongst their common friends, Mr. Combe told Shakspeare in a laughing manner, that he fancied he intended to write his epitaph, if he happened to out-live him; and since he could not know what might be said of him when he was dead,

Shakspeare was perhaps the only inhabitant of Stratford, whose business called him annually to London; and probably on his return from thence in the spring of the year 1609, he planted this tree.

As a similar enthusiasm to that which with such diligence has sought after Virgil's tomb, may lead my countrymen to visit the spot where our great bard spent several years of his life, and died; it may gratify them to be told that the ground on which *The New-Place* once stood, is now a garden belonging to Mr. Charles Hunt, an eminent attorney, and town-clerk of Stratford. Every Englishman will, I am sure, concur with me in wishing that it may enjoy perpetual verdure and fertility:

In this retreat our SHAKSPEARE'S godlike mind

With matchless skill survey'd all human kind.

Here may each sweet that blest Arabia knows,

Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose,

To latest time, their balmy odours fling,

And Nature here display eternal spring! MALONE.

⁶ — that he had a particular intimacy with Mr. Combe,] This Mr. John Combe I take to be the same, who, by Dugdale, in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, is said to have died in the year 1614, and for whom at the upper end of the quire of the guild of the holy cross at Stratford, a fair monument is erected, having a statue thereon cut in alabaster, and in a gown, with this epitaph: "Here lyeth interred the body of John Combe, Esq. who departing this life the 10th day of July, 1614, bequeathed by his last will and testament these sums ensuing, annually to be paid for ever; viz. xx. s. for two sermons to be preach'd in this church, and vi. l. xiii. s. iv. d. to buy ten gownes for ten poore people within the borough of Stratford; and 100l. to be lent to fifteen poore tradesmen of the same borough, from three years to three years, changing the parties every third year, at the rate of fifty shillings *per annum*, the which increase he appointed to be distributed towards the relief of the almes-poor there." The donation has all the air of a rich and sagacious usurer.

THEOBALD.

he desired it might be done immediately; upon which Shakspeare gave him these four verses :

“ *Ten in the hundred lies here ingrav'd;*⁷
 “ 'Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not sav'd;
 “ If any man ask, Who lies in this tomb?
 “ Oh! ho! quoth the devil, 'tis my John-a-Combe.”⁸

⁷ *Ten in the hundred lies here ingrav'd;*] In *The More the Merrier, containing Three Score and odd headless Epigrams, shot, (like the Fooles Bolts) among you, light where they will:* By H. P. Gent, &c. 1608, I find the following couplet, which is almost the same as the two beginning lines of this *Epitaph on John-a-Combe* :

“ FENERATORIS EPITAPHIUM.

“ Ten in the hundred lies under this stone,
 “ And a hundred to ten to the devil he's gone.”

Again, in *Wit's Interpreter*, 8vo. 3d edit. 1671, p. 298:

“ Here lies at least ten in the hundred,
 “ Shackled up both hands and feet,
 “ That at such as lent mony gratis wondred,
 “ The gain of usury was so sweet :
 “ But thus being now of life bereav'n,
 “ 'Tis a hundred to ten he's scarce gone to heav'n.”

STEEVENS.

So, in Camden's *Remains*, 1614:

“ Here lyes ten in the hundred,
 “ In the ground fast ramm'd;
 “ 'Tis an hundred to ten
 “ But his soule is damn'd.” MALONE.

⁸ *Oh! ho! quoth the devil, 'tis my John-a-Combe.*] The Rev. Francis Peck, in his *Memoirs of the Life and Poetical Works of Mr. John Milton*, 4to. 1740, p. 223, has introduced another epitaph imputed (on what authority is unknown) to Shakspeare. It is on *Tom-a-Combe*, alias *Thin-beard*, brother to this *John*, who is mentioned by Mr. Rowe:

“ Thin in beard, and thick in purse;
 “ Never man beloved worse;
 “ He went to the grave with many a curse:
 “ The devil and he had both one nurse.” STEEVENS.

I suspect that these lines were sent to Mr. Peck by some person that meant to impose upon him. It appears from Mr. John

But the sharpness of the satire is said to have stung the man so severely, that he never forgave it.⁹

Combe's will, that his brother Thomas was dead in 1614. John devised the greater part of his real and personal estate to his nephew Thomas Combe, with whom Shakspeare was certainly on good terms, having bequeathed him his sword.

Since I wrote the above, I find from the Register of Stratford, that Mr. Thomas Combe (the brother of John) was buried there, Jan. 22, 1609-10. MALONE.

⁹ ——— *the sharpness of the satire is said to have stung the man so severely, that he never forgave it.*] I take this opportunity to avow my disbelief that Shakspeare was the author of Mr. Combe's Épitaph, or that it was written by any other person at the request of that gentleman. If Betterton the player did really visit Warwickshire for the sake of collecting anecdotes relative to our author, perhaps he was too easily satisfied with such as fell in his way, without making any rigid search into their authenticity. It appears also from a following copy of this inscription, that it was not ascribed to Shakspeare so early as two years after his death. Mr. Reed of Staple-Inn obligingly pointed it out to me in the *Remains*, &c. of Richard Braithwaite, 1618; and as his edition of our epitaph varies in some measure from the latter one published by Mr. Rowe, I shall not hesitate to transcribe it:

“ Upon one *John Combe of Stratford upon Avon*, a notable Usurer, fastened upon a Tombe that he had caused to be built in his Life-Time:

“ Ten in the hundred must lie in his grave,

“ But a hundred to ten whether God will him have:

“ Who then must be interr'd in this tombe?

“ Oh (quoth the divill) my *John a Combe.*”

Here it may be observed that, strictly speaking, this is no jocular epitaph, but a malevolent prediction; and Braithwaite's copy is surely more to be depended on (being procured in or before the year 1618) than that delivered to Betterton or Rowe, almost a century afterwards. It has been already remarked, that two of the lines said to have been printed on this occasion, were printed as an epigram in 1608, by H. P. Gent. and are likewise found in Camden's *Remains*, 1614. I may add, that a usurer's solicitude to know what would be reported of him when he was dead, is not a very probable circumstance; neither was Shakspeare of a disposition to compose an invective, at once so bitter and uncharitable, during a *pleasant conversation among the com-*

He died in the 53d year of his age,¹ and was

mon friends of himself and a gentleman, with whose family he lived in such friendship, that at his death he bequeathed his sword to Mr. Thomas Combe as a legacy. A miser's monument indeed, constructed during his life-time, might be regarded as a challenge to satire; and we cannot wonder that anonymous lampoons should have been affixed to the marble designed to convey the character of such a being to posterity.—I hope I may be excused for this attempt to vindicate Shakspeare from the imputation of having poisoned the hour of confidence and festivity, by producing the severest of all censures on one of his company. I am unwilling, in short, to think he could so wantonly and so publicly have expressed his doubts concerning the salvation of one of his fellow-creatures. STEEVENS.

Since the above observations first appeared, (in a note to the edition of our author's Poems which I published in 1780,) I have obtained an additional proof of what has been advanced, in vindication of Shakspeare on this subject. It occurred to me that the will of John Combe might possibly throw some light on this matter, and an examination of it some years ago furnished me with such evidence as renders the story recorded in Braithwaite's *Remains* very doubtful: and still more strongly proves that, whoever was the author of this epitaph, it is highly improbable that it should have been written by Shakspeare.

The very first direction given by Mr. Combe in his will is, concerning a tomb to be erected to him *after his death*. "My will is, that a convenient tomb of the value of threescore pounds shall by my executors hereafter named, out of my goods and chattels first rayseed, within one year after my decease, be set over me." So much for Braithwaite's account of his having erected his own tomb in his life-time. That he had any quarrel with our author, or that Shakspeare had by any act *stung him so severely that Mr. Combe never forgave him*, appears equally void of foundation; for by his will he bequeaths "to Mr. William Shakspeare Five Pounds." It is probable that they lived in intimacy, and that Mr. Combe had made some purchase from our poet; for he devises to his brother George, "the close or grounds known by the name of Parson's Close, *alias Shakspeare's Close*." It must be owned that Mr. Combe's will is dated Jan. 23, 1612-13, about eighteen months before his death; and therefore the evidence now produced is not absolutely decisive, as he might have erected a tomb, and a rupture might have happened between him and Shakspeare, after the making of this will: but it

buried on the north side of the chancel, in the

is very improbable that any such rupture should have taken place; for if the supposed cause of offence had happened subsequently to the execution of the instrument, it is to be presumed that he would have revoked the legacy to Shakspeare: and the same argument may be urged with respect to the direction concerning his tomb.

Mr. Combe by his will bequeaths to Mr. Francis Collins, the elder, of the borough of Warwick, (who appears as a legatee and subscribing witness to Shakspeare's will, and therefore may be presumed a common friend,) ten pounds; to his godson John Collins, (the son of Francis,) ten pounds; to Mrs. Susanna Collins (probably godmother to our poet's eldest daughter) six pounds, thirteen shillings, and four-pence; to Mr. Henry Walker, (father to Shakspeare's godson,) twenty shillings; to the poor of Stratford twenty pounds; and to his servants, in various legacies, one hundred and ten pounds. He was buried at Stratford, July 12, 1614, and his will was proved, Nov. 10, 1615.

Our author, at the time of making *his* will, had it not in his power to show any testimony of his regard for Mr. Combe, that gentleman being then dead; but that he continued a friendly correspondence with his family to the last, appears evidently (as Mr. Steevens has observed) from his leaving his sword to Mr. Thomas Combe, the nephew, residuary legatee, and one of the executors of John.

On the whole we may conclude, that the lines preserved by Rowe, and inserted with some variation in Braithwaite's *Remains*, which the latter has mentioned to have been affixed to Mr. Combe's tomb in his life-time, were not written till after Shakspeare's death; for the executors, who did not prove the will till Nov. 1615, could not well have erected "a fair monument" of considerable expence for those times, till the middle or perhaps the end of the year 1616, in the April of which year our poet died. Between that time and the year 1616, when Braithwaite's book appeared, some one of those persons (we may presume) who had suffered by Mr. Combe's severity, gave vent to his feelings in the satirical composition preserved by Rowe; part of which, we have seen, was borrowed from epitaphs that had already been printed.—That Mr. Combe was a money-lender, may be inferred from a clause in his will, in which he mentions his "good and just debtors;" to every one of whom he remits, "twenty shillings for every twenty pounds, and so after

great church at Stratford, where a monument is

this rate for a greater or lesser debt," on their paying in to his executors what they owe.

Mr. Combe married Mrs. Rose Clopton, August 27, 1560; and therefore was probably, when he died, eighty years old. His property, from the description of it, appears to have been considerable.

In justice to this gentleman it should be remembered, that in the language of Shakspeare's age an *usurer* did not mean one who took exorbitant, but any, interest or usance for money; which many then considered as criminal. The opprobrious terms by which such a person was distinguished, *Ten in the hundred*, proves this; for *ten per cent.* was the ordinary interest of money. See Shakspeare's will.—Sir Philip Sidney directs by his will, made in 1586, that Sir Francis Walsingham shall put four thousand pounds which the testator bequeathed to his daughter, "to the best behoofe either by purchase of land or lease, or some other *good and godly* use, but in no case to let it out for any *usury* at all." MALONE.

¹ *He died in the 53d year of his age.*] He died on his birthday, April 23, 1616, and had exactly completed his fifty-second year. From Du Cange's Perpetual Almanack, Gloss. in v. *Annus*, (making allowance for the different style which then prevailed in England from that on which Du Cange's calculation was formed,) it appears, that the 23d of April in that year was a Tuesday.

No account has been transmitted to us of the malady which at so early a period of life deprived England of its brightest ornament. The private note-book of his son-in-law Dr. Hall,* containing a short state of the cases of his patients, was a few years ago put into my hands by my friend, the late Dr. Wright; and as Dr. Hall married our poet's daughter in the year 1607, and undoubtedly attended Shakspeare in his last illness, being then forty years old, I had hopes this book might have enabled me to gratify the publick curiosity on this subject. But unluckily the earliest case recorded by Hall, is dated in 1617. He had probably filled some other book with memorandums of his practice in preceding years; which by some contingency may hereafter be found, and inform posterity of the particular circum-

* Dr. Hall's pocket-book after his death fell into the hands of a surgeon of Warwick, who published a translation of it, (with some additions of his own) under the title of *Select Observations on the English Bodies of eminent Persons, in desperate Diseases, &c.* The third edition was printed in 1683.

§4 SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE, &c.

placed in the wall.² On his grave-stone underneath is,—

“ Good friend,³ for Jesus' sake forbear
“ To dig the dust inclosed here.
“ Blest be the man that spares these stones,
“ And curst be he that moves my bones.”⁴

stances that attended the death of our great poet.—From the 34th page of this book, which contains an account of a disorder under which his daughter Elizabeth laboured (about the year 1624,) and of the method of cure, it appears, that she was his only daughter; [Elizabeth Hall, *filia mea unica, tortura oris defædata.*] In the beginning of April in that year she visited London, and returned to Stratford on the 22d; an enterprise at that time “ of great pith and moment.”

While we lament that our incomparable poet was snatched from the world at a time when his faculties were in their full vigour, and before he was “ declined into the vale of years,” let us be thankful that “ this sweetest child of Fancy” did not perish while he yet lay in the cradle. He was born at Stratford-upon-Avon in April 1564; and I have this moment learned from the Register of that town that the plague broke out there on the 30th of the following June, and raged with such violence between that day and the last day of December, that two hundred and thirty-eight persons were in that period carried to the grave, of which number probably 216 died of that malignant distemper; and one only of the whole number resided, not in Stratford, but in the neighbouring town of Welcombe. From the 237 inhabitants of Stratford, whose names appear in the Register, twenty-one are to be subducted, who, it may be presumed, would have died in six months, in the ordinary course of nature; for in the five preceding years, reckoning, according to the style of that time, from March 25, 1559, to March 25, 1564, two hundred and twenty-one persons were buried at Stratford, of whom 210 were townsmen: that is, of these latter 42 died each year, at an average. Supposing one in thirty-five to have died annually, the total number of the inhabitants of Stratford at that period was 1470; and consequently the plague in the last six months of the year 1564 carried off more than a seventh part of them. Fortunately for mankind it did not reach the house in which the infant Shakspeare lay; for not one of that name appears in the dead list.—May we suppose, that, like Horace, he lay secure and fearless in the midst of contagion and death, protected by the

Muses to whom his future life was to be devoted, and covered over—

“ ————— sacra
 “ Lauroque, collataque myrto,
 “ Non sine Diis animosus infans.” MALONE.

* — where a monument is placed in the wall.] He is represented under an arch, in a sitting posture, a cushion spread before him, with a pen in his right hand, and his left rested on a scroll of paper. The following Latin distich is engraved under the cushion :

*Judicio Pylium, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
 Terra tegit, populus mæret, Olympus habet.*

THEOBALD.

The first syllable in *Socratem* is here made short, which cannot be allowed. Perhaps we should read *Sophoclem*. Shakspeare is then appositely compared with a dramattick author among the ancients: but still it should be remembered that the elogium is lessened while the metre is reformed; and it is well known that some of our early writers of Latin poetry were uncommonly negligent in their prosody, especially in proper names. The thought of this distich, as Mr. Tollet observes, might have been taken from *The Faery Queene* of Spenser, B. II. c. ix. st. 48, and c. x. st. 3.

To this Latin inscription on Shakspeare should be added the lines which are found underneath it on his monument :

“ Stay, passenger, why dost thou go so fast ?
 “ Read, if thou canst, whom envious death hath plac’d
 “ Within this monument; Shakspeare, with whom
 “ Quick nature dy’d; whose name doth deck the tomb
 “ Far more than cost; since all that he hath writ
 “ Leaves living art but page to serve his wit.”

“ Obiit An^o. Dni. 1616.

æt. 53, die 23 Apri. STEEVENS.

It appears from the Verses of Leonard Digges, that our author’s monument was erected before the year 1623. It has been engraved by Vertue, and done in mezzotinto by Miller.

A writer in *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, Vol. XXIX. p. 267, says, there is as strong a resemblance between the bust at Stratford, and the portrait of our author prefixed to the first folio edition of his plays, “ as can well be between a statue and a picture.” To me (and I have viewed it several times with a good deal of attention) it appeared in a very different light. When I went last to Stratford, I carried with me the only genuine prints of Shakspeare that were then extant, and I could not trace any resemblance between them and this figure. There is a pertness

in the countenance of the latter totally differing from that placid composure and thoughtful gravity, so perceptible in his original portrait and his best prints. Our poet's monument having been erected by his son-in-law, Dr. Hall, the statuary probably had the assistance of some picture, and failed only from want of skill to copy it.

Mr. Granger observes (*Biog. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 259,) that "*it has been said* there never was an original portrait of Shakspeare, but that Sir Thomas Clarges after his death caused a portrait to be drawn for him from a person who nearly resembled him." This entertaining writer was a great collector of anecdotes, but not always very scrupulous in inquiring into the authenticity of the information which he procured; for this improbable tale, I find, on examination, stands only on the insertion of an anonymous writer in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, for August, 1759, who boldly "affirmed it as an absolute fact;" but being afterwards publickly called upon to produce his authority, never produced any. There is the strongest reason therefore to presume it a forgery.

"Mr. Walpole (adds Mr. Granger) informs me, that the only original picture of Shakspeare is that which belonged to Mr. Keck, from whom it passed to Mr. Nicoll, whose only daughter married the Marquis of Caernarvon" [now Duke of Chandos].

From this picture, his Grace, at my request, very obligingly permitted a drawing to be made by that excellent artist Mr. Ozias Humphry; and from that drawing the print prefixed to the present edition has been engraved.

In the manuscript notes of the late Mr. Oldys, this portrait is said to have been "painted by old Cornelius Jansen." "Others," he adds, "say, that it was done by Richard Burbage the player;" and in another place he ascribes it to "John Taylor, the player." This Taylor, it is said in the *Critical Review* for 1770, left it by *will* to Sir William D'Avenant. But unluckily there was no player of the christian and surname of John Taylor, contemporary with Shakspeare. The player who performed in Shakspeare's company, was Joseph Taylor. There was, however, a *painter* of the name of *John Taylor*, to whom in his early youth it is barely possible that we may have been indebted for the only original portrait of our author; for in the Picture-Gallery at Oxford are two portraits of Taylor the Water-Poet, and on each of them "*John Taylor pinx. 1655.*" There appears some resemblance of *manner* between these portraits and the picture of Shakspeare in the Duke of Chandos's collection. That picture (I express the opinion of Sir Joshua Reynolds) has not the least air of Cornelius Jansen's performances.

That this picture was once in the possession of Sir Wm. D'Ave-

nant is highly probable ; but it is much more likely to have been *purchased* by him from some of the players after the theatres were shut up by authority, and the veterans of the stage were reduced to great distress, than to have been bequeathed to him by the person who painted it ; in whose custody it is improbable that it should have remained. Sir William D^r Avenant appears to have died insolvent. There is no Will of his in the Prerogative-Office ; but administration of his effects was granted to John Otway, his *principal creditor*, in May 1668. After his death, Betterton the actor bought it, probably at a publick sale of his effects. While it was in Betterton's possession, it was engraved by Vandergucht, for Mr. Rowe's edition of Shakspeare, in 1709. Betterton made no will, and died very indigent. He had a large collection of portraits of actors in crayons, which were bought at the sale of his goods, by Bullfinch the Printseller, who sold them to one Mr. Sykes. The portrait of Shakspeare was purchased by Mrs. Barry the actress, who sold it afterwards for 40 guineas to Mr. Robert Keck. In 1719, while it was in Mr. Keck's possession, an engraving was made from it by Vertue a large half-sheet. Mr. Nicoll of Colney-Hatch, Middlesex, marrying the heiress of the Keck family, this picture devolved to him ; and while in his possession, it was, in 1747, engraved by Houbraken by Birch's *Illustrious Heads*. By the marriage of the Duke of Chandos with the daughter of Mr. Nicoll, it became his Grace's property.

Sir Godfrey Kneller painted a picture of our author, which he presented to Dryden, but from what picture he copied, I am unable to ascertain, as I have never seen Kneller's picture. The poet repaid him by an elegant copy of Verses.—See his Poems, Vol. II. p. 231, edit. 1743 :

“ Shakspeare, thy gift, I place before my sight,
 “ With awe I ask his blessing as I write ;
 “ With reverence look on his majestick face,
 “ Proud to be less, but of his godlike race.
 “ His soul inspires me, while thy praise I write,
 “ And I like Teucer under Ajax fight:
 “ Bids thee, through me, be bold ; with dauntless brea
 “ Contemn the bad, and emulate the best :
 “ Like his, thy criticks in the attempt are lost,
 “ When most they rail, know then, they envy most.”

It appears from a circumstance mentioned by Dryden, that these verses were written after the year 1683 : probably after Rymer's book had appeared in 1693. Dryden having made no will, and his wife Lady Elizabeth renouncing, administration was granted on the 10th of June, 1700, to his son Charles, who was drowned in the Thames near Windsor in 1704. His younger

brother, Erasmus, succeeded to the title of Baronet, and died without issue in 1711; but I know not what became of his effects, or where this picture is now to be found.

About the year 1725 a mezzotinto of Shakspeare was scraped by Simon, said to be done from an original picture painted by Zoust or Soest, then in the possession of T. Wright, painter, in Covent Garden. The earliest known picture painted by Zoust in England, was done in 1657; so that if he ever painted a picture of Shakspeare, it must have been a copy. It could not however have been made from D'Avenant's picture, (unless the painter took very great liberties,) for the whole air, dress, disposition of the hair, &c. are different. I have lately seen a picture in the possession of — Douglas, Esq. at Teddington near Twickenham, which is, I believe, the very picture from which Simon's mezzotinto was made. It is on canvas, (about 24 inches by 20,) and somewhat smaller than the life.

The earliest print of our poet that appeared, is that in the title-page of the first folio edition of his works, 1623, engraved by Martin Droeshout. On this print the following lines, addressed TO THE READER, were written by Ben Jonson:

“ This figure that thou here seest put,
 “ It was for gentle Shakspeare cut;
 “ Wherein the graver had a strife
 “ With nature, to out-do the life.
 “ O, could he but have drawn his wit
 “ As well in brass, as he hath hit
 “ His face, the print would then surpass
 “ All that was ever writ in brass;
 “ But since he cannot, reader, look
 “ Not on his picture, but his book.”

Droeshout engraved also the heads of John Fox the martyrologist, Montjoy Blount, son of Charles Blount Earl of Devonshire, William Fairfax, who fell at the siege of Frankendale in 1621, and John Howson, Bishop of Durham. The portrait of Bishop Howson is at Christ Church, Oxford. By comparing any of these prints (the two latter of which are well executed) with the original pictures from whence the engravings were made, a better judgment might be formed of the fidelity of our author's portrait, as exhibited by this engraver, than from Jonson's assertion, that “ in this figure

“ — the graver had a strife
 “ With nature to out-do the life;”

a compliment which in the books of that age was paid to so many engravers, that nothing decisive can be inferred from it.— It does not appear from what picture this engraving was made: but from the dress, and the singular disposition of the hair, &c.

it undoubtedly was engraved from a picture, and probably a very ordinary one. There is no other way of accounting for the great difference between this print of Droeshout's, and his spirited portraits of Fairfax and Bishop Howson, but by supposing that the picture of Shakspeare from which he copied was a very coarse performance.

The next print in point of time is, according to Mr. Walpole and Mr. Granger, that executed by J. Payne, a scholar of Simon Pass, in 1634; with a laurel-branch in the poet's left hand. A print of Shakspeare by so excellent an engraver as Payne, would probably exhibit a more perfect representation of him than any other of those times; but I much doubt whether any such ever existed. Mr. Granger, I apprehend, has erroneously attributed to Payne the head done by Marshall in 1640, (apparently from Droeshout's larger print,) which is prefixed to a spurious edition of Shakspeare's Poems published in that year. In Marshall's print the poet *has a laurel branch in his left hand*. Neither Mr. Walpole, nor any of the other great collectors of prints, are possessed of, or ever saw, any print of Shakspeare by Payne, as far as I can learn.

Two other prints only remain to be mentioned; one engraved by Vertue in 1721, for Mr. Pope's edition of our author's plays in quarto; said to be engraved from an original picture in the possession of the Earl of Oxford; and another, a mezzotinto, by Earlom, prefixed to an edition of *King Lear*, in 1770; said to be done from an original by Cornelius Jansen, in the collection of Charles Jennens, Esq. but Mr. Granger justly observes, "as it is dated in 1610, before Jansen was in England, it is highly probable that it was not painted by him, at least, that he did not paint it as a portrait of Shakspeare."

Most of the other prints of Shakspeare that have appeared, were copied from some or other of those which I have mentioned.

MALONE.

"The portrait palmed upon Mr. Pope" (I use the words of the late Mr. Oldys, in a MS. note to his copy of Langbaine,) "for an original of Shakspeare, from which he had his fine plate engraven, is evidently a juvenile portrait of King James I." I am no judge in these matters, but only deliver an opinion, which if ill-grounded may be easily overthrown. The portrait, to me at least, has no traits of Shakspeare. STEEVENS.

³ *On his grave-stone underneath is, Good friend, &c.] This epitaph is expressed in the following uncouth mixture of small and capital letters:*

"Good Frennd for Iesus SAKE forbearē

"To digg T-E Dust EnclōAsed HERE

"Blese be **THE** Man $\frac{1}{2}$ spares **THEs** Stones

"And curst be He $\frac{1}{2}$ moves my Bones." STEEVENS.

⁴ *And curst be he that moves my bones.*] It is uncertain whether this epitaph was written by Shakspeare himself, or by one of his friends after his death. The imprecation contained in this last line, was perhaps suggested by an apprehension that our author's remains might share the same fate with those of the rest of his countrymen, and be added to the immense pile of human bones deposited in the charnel-house at Stratford. This, however, is mere conjecture; for similar execrations are found in many ancient Latin epitaphs.

Mr. Steevens has justly mentioned it as a singular circumstance, that Shakspeare does not appear to have written any verses on his contemporaries, either in praise of the living, or in honour of the dead. I once imagined that he had mentioned Spenser with kindness in one of his Sonnets; but have lately discovered that the Sonnet to which I allude, was written by Richard Barnefield. If, however, the following epitaphs be genuine, (and indeed the latter is much in Shakspeare's manner,) he in two instances overcame that modest diffidence, which seems to have supposed the elogium of his humble muse of no value.

In a Manuscript volume of poems by William Herrick and others, in the hand-writing of the time of Charles I. which is among Rawlinson's Collections in the Bodleian Library, is the following epitaph, ascribed to our poet:

“ AN EPITAPH.

“ When God was pleas'd, the world unwilling yet,

“ Elias James to nature payd his debt,

“ And here repositeth: as he liv'd, he dyde;

“ The saying in him strongly verifide,—

“ Such life, such death: then, the known truth to tell,

“ He liv'd a godly life, and dyde as well.

“ WM. SHAKSPEARE.”

There was formerly a family of the surname of *James* at Stratford. Anne, the wife of *Richard James*, was buried there on the same day with our poet's widow; and Margaret, the daughter of *John James*, died there in April, 1616.

A monumental inscription “of a better leer,” and said to be written by our author, is preserved in a collection of Epitaphs, at the end of the Visitation of Salop, taken by Sir William Dugdale in the year 1664, now remaining in the College of Arms, C. 35, fol. 20; a transcript of which Sir Isaac Heard, Garter, Principal King at Arms, has obligingly transmitted to me.

Among the monuments in Tongue church, in the county of Salop, is one erected in remembrance of Sir Thomas Stanley, Knight, who died, as I imagine, about the year 1600. In the Visitation-book it is thus described by Sir William Dugdale:

“ On the north side of the chancell stands a very stately tombe, supported with Corinthian columnes. It hath two figures of men in armour, thereon lying, the one below the arches and columnes, and the other above them, and this epitaph upon it.

“ Thomas Stanley, Knight, second son of Edward Earle of Derby, Lord Stanley, and Strange, descended from the famielie of the Stanleys, married Margaret Vernon, one of the daughters and co-heires of Sir George Vernon of Nether-Haddon, in the county of Derby, Knight, by whom he had issue two sons, Henry and Edward. Henry died an infant; Edward survived, to whom those lordships descended; and married the lady Lucie Percie, second daughter of the Earle of Northumberland: by her he had issue seven daughters. She and her foure daughters, Arabella, Marie, Alice, and Priscilla, are interred under a monument in the church of Waltham in the county of Essex. Thomas, her son, died in his infancy, and is buried in the parish church of Winwich in the county of Lancaster. The other three, Petronilla, Frances, and Venesia, are yet living.

These following verses were made by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, the late famous tragedian;

“ *Written upon the east end of this tombe.*

“ Aske who lyes here, but do not weepe;
 “ He is not dead, he doth but sleepe.
 “ This stony register is for his bones,
 “ His fame is more perpetual than these stones:
 “ And his own goodness, with himself being gone,
 “ Shall live, when earthly monument is none.”

“ *Written upon the west end thereof.*

“ Not monumental stone preserves our fame,
 “ Nor skye-aspiring pyramids our name.
 “ The memory of him for whom this stands,
 “ Shall out-live marble, and defacers' hands,
 “ When all to time's consumption shall be given,
 “ Stanley, for whom this stands, shall stand in heaven.”

The last line of this epitaph, though the worst, bears very strong marks of the hand of Shakspeare. The beginning of the first line, “ Aske who lyes here,” reminds us of that which we have been just examining: “ *If any man ask, who lies in this tomb,*” &c.—And in the fifth line we find a thought which our poet has also introduced in *King Henry VIII*:

“ Ever belov'd and loving may his rule be!
 “ And, when old time shall lead him to his grave,
 “ *Goodness and he fill up one monument!*”

He had three daughters,⁵ of which two lived to be married; Judith, the elder, to one Mr. Thomas Quiney,⁶ by whom she had three sons, who all died

This epitaph must have been written after the year 1600, for Venetia Stanley, who afterwards was the wife of Sir Kenelm Digby, was born in that year. With a view to ascertain its date more precisely, the churches of Great and Little Waltham have been examined for the monument said to have been erected to Lady Lucy Stanley and her four daughters, but in vain; for no trace of it remains: nor could the time of their respective deaths be ascertained, the registers of those parishes being lost.— Sir William Dugdale was born in Warwickshire, was bred at the free-school of Coventry, and in the year 1625 purchased the manor of Blythe in that county, where he then settled and afterwards spent a great part of his life: so that his testimony respecting this epitaph is sufficient to ascertain its authenticity.

MALONE.

* *He had three daughters,*] In this circumstance Mr. Rowe must have been mis-informed. In the Register of Stratford, no mention is made of any daughter of our author's but Susanna and Judith. He had indeed three *children*; the two already mentioned, and a son, named Hamnet, of whom Mr. Rowe takes no notice. He was a twin child, born at the same time with Judith. Hence probably the mistake. He died in the twelfth year of his age, in 1596. MALONE.

⁶ ——— *Judith, the elder, to one Mr. Thomas Quiney,*] This also is a mistake. Judith was Shakspeare's youngest daughter. She died at Stratford-upon-Avon a few days after she had completed her seventy-seventh year, and was buried there, Feb. 9, 1661-62. She was married to Mr. Quiney, who was four years younger than herself, on the 10th of February, 1615-16, and not as Mr. West supposed, in the year 1616-17. He was led into the mistake by the figures 1616 standing nearly opposite to the entry concerning her marriage; but those figures relate to the first entry in the subsequent month of April. The Register appears thus:

February. ———

3. Francis Bushill to Isabel Whood.

1616. 5. Rich. Sandells to Joan Ballamy.

10. Tho. Queeny to Judith Shakspere.

April. ———

14. Will. Borowes to Margaret Davies.

and all the following entries in that and a part of the ensuing page

without children; and Susanna, who was his favourite, to Dr. John Hall, a physician of good reputation in that country.⁷ She left one child only,

are of 1616; the year then beginning on the 25th of March. Whether the above 10 relates to the month of February or April, Judith was certainly married before her father's death: if it relates to February, she was married on February 10, 1615-16; if to April, on the 10th of April 1616. From Shakspeare's will it appears, that this match was a stolen one; for he speaks of such future "*husband as she shall be married to.*" It is strange that the ceremony should have been publicly celebrated in the church of Stratford without his knowledge; and the improbability of such a circumstance might lead us to suppose that she was married on the 10th of April, about a fortnight after the execution of her father's will. But the entry of the baptism of her first child, (Nov. 23, 1616,) as well as the entry of the marriage, ascertain it to have taken place in February.

Mr. West, without intending it, has impeached the character of this lady; for her first child, according to his representation, must be supposed to have been born some months before her marriage; since among the Baptisms I find this entry of the christening of her eldest son: "1616. Nov. 23. Shakspeare, filius Thomas Quiney, Gent." and according to Mr. West she was not married till the following February. This *Shakspeare Quiney* died in his infancy at Stratford, and was buried May 8th, 1617. Judith's second son, *Richard*, was baptized on February 9th, 1617-18. He died at Stratford in Feb. 1638-9. in the 21st year of his age, and was buried there on the 20th of that month. Her third son, *Thomas*, was baptized August 29, 1619, and was buried also at Stratford, January 28, 1638-9. There had been a plague in the town in the preceding summer, that carried off about fifty persons. MALONE.

⁷ *Dr. John Hall, a physician of good reputation in that country.*] Susanna's husband, Dr. John Hall, died in Nov. 1635, and is interred in the chancel of the church of Stratford near his wife. He was buried on the 26th of November, as appears from the Register of burials at Stratford:

"November 26, 1635, Johannes Hall, medicus peritissimus."

The following is a transcript of his will, extracted from the Register of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury:

"The last Will and Testament nuncupative of John Hall of Stratford-upon-Avon in the county of Warwick, Gent. made and declared the five and twentieth of November, 1635. *Im-*

primus, I give unto my wife my house in London. *Item*, I give unto my daughter Nash my house in Acton. *Item*, I give unto my daughter Nash my meadow. *Item*, I give my goods and money unto my wife and my daughter Nash, to be equally divided betwixt them. *Item*, concerning my study of books, I leave them, said he, to you, my son Nash, to dispose of them as you see good. As for my manuscripts, I would have given them to Mr. Boles, if he had been here; but forasmuch as he is not here present, you may, son Nash, burn them, or do with them what you please. Witnesses hereunto,

“ Thomas Nash.

“ Simon Trapp.”

The testator not having appointed any executor, administration was granted to his widow, Nov. 23, 1636.

Some at least of Dr. Hall's manuscripts escaped the flames, one of them being yet extant. See p. 83, n. 1.

I could not, after a very careful search, find the will of Susanna Hall in the Prerogative-office, nor is it preserved in the Archives of the diocese of Worcester, the Registrar of which diocese at my request very obligingly examined the indexes of all the wills proved in his office between the years 1649 and 1670; but in vain. The town of Stratford-upon-Avon is in that diocese.

The inscriptions on the tomb-stones of our poet's favourite daughter and her husband are as follows:

“ Here lyeth the body of John Hall, Gent. he marr. Susanna, y^e daughter and co-heire of Will. Shakspeare, Gent. he deceased Nov. 25, A^o. 1635, aged 60.”

“ Hallius hic situs est, medica celeberrimus arte,

“ Expectans regni gaudia læta Dei.

“ Dignus erat meritis qui Nestora vinceret annis;

“ In terris omnes sed rapit æqua dies.

“ Ne tumulo quid desit, adest fidissima conjux,

“ Et vitæ comitem nunc quoque mortis habet.”

These verses should seem, from the last two lines, not to have been inscribed on Dr. Hall's tomb-stone till 1649. Perhaps indeed the last distich only was then added.

“ Here lyeth the body of Susanna, wife to John Hall, Gent. y^e daughter of William Shakspeare, Gent. She deceased the 11th of July, A^o. 1649, aged 66.”

“ Witty above her sexe, but that's not all,

“ Wise to salvation was good Mistriss Hall.

“ Something of Shakspeare was in that, but this

“ Wholy of him with whom she's now in blisse.

a daughter, who was married first to Thomas Nashe,⁸

“ Then, passenger, hast ne’re a teare,
 “ To weepe with her that wept with all:
 “ That wept, yet set her selfe to chere
 “ Them up with comforts cordiall.

 “ Her love shall live, her mercy spread,
 “ When thou hast ne’re a teare to shed.”

The foregoing English verses, which are preserved by Dugdale, are not now remaining, half of the tomb-stone having been cut away, and another half stone joined to it; with the following inscription on it—“ Here lyeth the body of Richard Watts of Ryhon-Clifford, in the parish of old Stratford, Gent. who departed this life the 23d of May, Anno Dom. 1707, and in the 46th year of his age.” This Mr. Watts, as I am informed by the Rev. Mr. Davenport, was owner of, and lived at the estate of Ryhon-Clifford, which was once the property of Dr. Hall.

Mrs. Hall was buried on the 16th of July, 1649, as appears from the Register of Stratford. MALONE.

⁸ *She left one child only, a daughter, who was married first to Thomas Nashe, Esq.]* Elizabeth, our poet’s grand-daughter, who appears to have been a favourite, Shakspeare having left her by his will a memorial of his affection, though she at that time was but eight years old, was born in February 1607-8, as appears by an entry in the Register of Stratford, which Mr. West omitted in the transcript with which he furnished Mr. Steevens. I learn from the same Register that she was married in 1626: “ MARRIAGES. April 22, 1626, Mr. Thomas Nash to Mistriss Elizabeth Hall.” It should be remembered that every unmarried lady was called *Mistress* till the time of George I. Hence our author’s *Mistress* Anne Page. Nor in speaking of an unmarried lady could her christian name be omitted, as it often is at present; for then no distinction would have remained between her and her mother. Some married ladies indeed were distinguished from their daughters by the title of *Madam*.

Mr. Nash died in 1647, as appears by the inscription on his tomb-stone in the chancel of the church of Stratford:

“ Here resteth y^e body of Thomas Nashe, Esq. He mar. Elizabeth the daugh. and heire of John Hall, Gent. He died April 5th, A^o. 1647, aged 53.”

Esq. and afterwards to Sir John Barnard of Abington,⁹ but died likewise without issue.¹

“ *Fata manent omnes; hunc non virtute carentem,*
 “ *Ut neque divitils, abstulit atra dies.*
 “ *Abstulit, at referet lux ultima. Siste, viator;*
 “ *Si peritura paras, per male parta peris.*”

The letters printed in Italicks are now obliterated.

By his last will, which is in the Prerogative-Office, dated August 26, 1642, he bequeathed to his well beloved wife, Elizabeth Nash, and her assigns, for her life, (in lieu of jointure and thirds,) one messuage or tenement, with the appurtenances, situate in the Chapel Street in Stratford, then in the tenure and occupation of Joan Norman, widow; one meadow, known by the name of the Square Meadow, with the appurtenances, in the parish of old Stratford, lying near unto the great stone-bridge of Stratford; one other meadow with the appurtenances, known by the name of the Wash Meadow; one little meadow with the appurtenances, adjoining to the said Wash Meadow; and also all the tythes of the manor or lordship of Shottery. He devises to his kinsman Edward Nash, the son of his uncle George Nash of London, his heirs and assigns, (*inter alia*) the messuage or tenement, then in his own occupation, called *The New-Place*, situate in the Chapel Street, in Stratford; together with all and singular houses, outhouses, barns, stables, orchards, gardens, easements, profits, or commodities, to the same belonging; and also four-yard land of arable land, meadow, and pasture, with the appurtenances, lying and being in the common fields of Old Stratford, with all the easements, profits, commons, commodities, and hereditaments, of the same four-yard lands belonging; then in the tenure, use, and occupation of him the said Thomas Nash; and one other messuage or tenement, with the appurtenances, situate in the parish of —, in London, and called or known by the name of *The Wardrobe*, and then in the tenure, use, and occupation of — Dickes. And from and after the death of his said wife, he bequeaths the meadows above named, and devised to her for life, to his said cousin Edward Nash, his heirs and assigns for ever. After various other bequests, he directs that one hundred pounds, at the least, be laid out in mourning gowns, cloaks, and apparel, to be distributed among his kindred and friends, in such manner as his executrix shall think fit. He appoints his wife Elizabeth Nash his residuary legatee, and sole executrix, and ordains Edmund Rawlins, Wil-

This is what I could learn of any note, either

liam Smith, and John Easton, overseers of his will, to which the witnesses are John Such, Michael Jonson, and Samuel Rawlins.

By a nuncupative codicil dated on the day of his death, April 4th, 1647, he bequeaths (*inter alia*) "to his mother Mrs. Hall fifty pounds; to Elizabeth Hathaway fifty pounds; to Thomas Hathaway fifty pounds; to Judith Hathaway ten pounds; to his uncle Nash and his aunt, his cousin Sadler and his wife, his cousin Richard Quiney and his wife, his cousin Thomas Quiney and his wife, twenty shillings each, to buy them rings." The meadows which by his will he had devised to his wife for life, he by this codicil devises to her, her heirs and assigns, for ever, to the end that they may not be severed from her own land; and he "appoints and declares that the inheritance of his land given to his cousin Edward Nash should be by him settled after his decease, upon his son Thomas Nash, and his heirs, and for want of such heirs then to remain and descend to his own right heirs."

It is observable that in this will the testator makes no mention of any child, and there is no entry of any issue of his marriage in the Register of Stratford; I have no doubt, therefore, that he died without issue, and that a pedigree with which Mr. Whalley furnished Mr. Steevens a few years ago, is inaccurate. The origin of the mistake in that pedigree will be pointed out in its proper place.

As by Shakspeare's will his daughter Susanna had an estate for life in *The New Place*, &c. and his grand-daughter Elizabeth an estate tail in remainder, they probably on the marriage of Elizabeth to Mr. Nash, by a fine and recovery cut off the entail; and by a deed to lead the uses gave him the entire dominion over that estate; which he appears to have misused by devising it from Shakspeare's family to his own.

Mr. Nash's will and codicil were proved June 5, 1647, and administration was then granted to his widow. MALONE.

⁹ — Sir John Barnard of Abington,] Sir John Barnard of Abington, a small village about a mile from the town of Northampton, was created a Knight by King Charles II. Nov. 25, 1661. In 1671 he sold the manor and advowson of the church of Abington, which his ancestors had possessed for more than two hundred years, to William Thursby, Esq. Sir John Barnard was the eldest son of Baldwin Barnard, Esq. by Eleanor, daughter and co-heir of John Fulwood of Ford Hall in the county of

relating to himself or family; the character of the man is best seen in his writings. But since Ben

Warwick, Esq. and was born in 1605. He first married Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Clement Edmonds of Preston, in Northamptonshire, by whom he had four sons and four daughters. She dying in 1642, he married secondly our poet's grand-daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Nash, on the 5th of June 1649, at Billesley in Warwickshire, about three miles from Stratford-upon-Avon. If any of Shakspeare's manuscripts remained in his grand-daughter's custody at the time of her second marriage, (and some letters at least she surely must have had,) they probably were then removed to the house of her new husband at Abington. Sir Hugh Clopton, who was born two years after her death, mentioned to Mr. Macklin, in the year 1742, an old tradition that she had carried away with her from Stratford many of her grandfather's papers. On the death of Sir John Barnard they must have fallen into the hands of Mr. Edward Bagley, Lady Barnard's executor; and if any descendant of that gentleman be now living, in his custody they probably remain. MALONE.

¹ ——— but died likewise without issue.] Confiding in a pedigree transmitted by Mr. Whalley some years ago to Mr. Steevens, I once supposed that Mr. Rowe was inaccurate in saying that our poet's grand-daughter died without issue. But he was certainly right; and this lady was undoubtedly the last lineal descendant of Shakspeare. There is no entry, as I have already observed, in the Register of Stratford, of any issue of hers by Mr. Nash; nor does he in his will mention any child, devising the greater part of his property between his wife and his kinsman, Edward Nash. That Lady Barnard had no issue by her second husband, is proved by the Register of Abington, in which there is no entry of the baptism of any child of that marriage, though there are regular entries of the time when the several children of Sir John Barnard by his first wife were baptized. Lady Barnard died at Abington, and was buried there on the 17th of February 1669-70; but her husband did not show his respect for her memory by a monument, or even an inscription of any kind. He seems not to have been sensible of the honourable alliance he had made. Shakspeare's grand-daughter would not, at this day, go to her grave without a memorial. By her last will, which I subjoin, she directs her trustee to sell her estate of *New-Place*, &c. to the best bidder, and to offer it first to her cousin Mr. Edward Nash. How she then came to have any property in *New-Place*, which her first husband had devised to this very Edward Nash,

Jonson has made a sort of an essay towards it in his *Discoveries*, I will give it in his words :

does not appear; but I suppose that after the death of Mr. Thomas Nash she exchanged the patrimonial lands which he bequeathed to her, with Edward Nash and his son, and took New-Place, &c. instead of them.

Sir John Barnard died at Abington, and was buried there on March 5th, 1673-4. On his tomb-stone, in the chancel of the church, is the following inscription :

Hic jacent exuvie generosissimi viri Johannis Bernard, militis; patre, avo, abavo, tritavo, aliisque progenitoribus per ducentos et amplius annos hujus oppidi de Abingdon dominis, insignis: qui fato cessit undeseptuagesimo ætatis suæ anno, quinto nonas Martii, annoque a partu B. Virginis, MDCLXXIII.

Sir John Barnard having made no will, administration of his effects was granted on the 7th of November 1674, to Henry Gilbert of Locko in the county of Derby, who had married his daughter Elizabeth by his first wife, and to his two other surviving daughters; Mary Higgs, widow of Thomas Higgs of Colesborne, Esq. and Eleanor Cotton, the wife of Samuel Cotton, Esq. All Sir John Barnard's other children except the three above mentioned died without issue. I know not whether any descendant of these be now living: but if that should be the case, among their papers may possibly be found some fragment or other relative to Shakspeare; for by his grand-daughter's order, the administrators of her husband were entitled to keep possession of her house, &c. in Stratford, for six months after his death.

The following is a copy of the will of this last descendant of our poet, extracted from the Registry of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury:

“ In the Name of God, Amen. I Dame Elizabeth Barnard, wife of Sir John Barnard of Abington in the county of Northampton, knight, being in perfect memory, (blessed be God!) and mindful of mortality, do make this my last will and testament in manner and form following :

“ Whereas by my certain deed or writing under my hand and seal, dated on or about the eighteenth day of April, 1653, according to a power therein mentioned, I the said Elizabeth have limited and disposed of all that my messuage with the appurtenances in Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, called the New-Place, and all that four-yard land and an half in Stratford-Welcombe and Bishopton in the county of Warwick, (after the decease of the said Sir John Barnard, and me the said Eliza-

“ I remember the players have often mentioned
 “ it as an honour to Shakspeare, that in writing

beth,) unto Henry Smith of Stratford aforesaid, Gent. and Job Dighton of the Middle Temple, London, Esq. since deceased, and their heirs; upon trust that they, and the survivor, and the heirs of such survivor, should bargain and sell the same for the best value they can get, and the money thereby to be raised to be employed and disposed of to such person and persons, and in such manner as I the said Elizabeth should by any writing or note under my hand, truly testified, declare and nominate; as thereby may more fully appear. Now my will is, and I do hereby signify and declare my mind and meaning to be, that the said Henry Smith, my surviving trustee, or his heirs, shall with all convenient speed after the decease of the said Sir John Barnard my husband, make sale of the inheritance of all and singular the premises, and that my loving cousin Edward Nash, Esq. shall have the first offer or refusal thereof, according to my promise formerly made to him: and the monies to be raised by such sale I do give, dispose of, and appoint the same to be paid and distributed, as is herein after expressed; that is to say, to my cousin Thomas Welles of Carleton, in the county of Bedford, Gent. the sum of fifty pounds, to be paid him within one year next after such sale: and if the said Thomas Wells shall happen to die before such time as his said legacy shall become due to him, then my desire is, that my kinsman Edward Bagley, citizen of London, shall have the sole benefit thereof.

“ *Item*, I do give and appoint unto Judith Hathaway, one of the daughters of my kinsman Thomas Hathaway, late of Stratford aforesaid, the annual sum of five pounds of lawful money of England, to be paid unto her yearly and every year, from and after the decease of the said survivor of the said Sir John Barnard and me the said Elizabeth, for and during the natural life of her the said Judith, at the two most usual feasts or days of payment in the year, *videlicet*, the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Saint Michael, the archangel, by equal portions, the first payment thereof to begin at such of the said feasts as shall next happen, after the decease of the survivor of the said Sir John Barnard and me the said Elizabeth, if the said premises can be so soon sold; or otherwise so soon as the same can be sold: and if the said Judith shall happen to marry, and shall be minded to release the said annual sum of five pounds, and shall accordingly release and quit all her interest and right in and to the same after it shall become due to her, then and in such case, I do give and appoint to her the sum

“ (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a

of forty pounds in lieu thereof, to be paid unto her at the time of the executing of such release as aforesaid.

“ *Item*, I give and appoint unto Joan the wife of Edward Kent, and one other of the daughters of the said Thomas Hathaway, the sum of fifty pounds, to be likewise paid unto her within one year next after the decease of the survivor of the said Sir John Barnard and me the said Elizabeth, if the said premises can be soon sold, or otherwise so soon as the same can be sold ; and if the said Joan shall happen to die before the said fifty pounds shall be paid to her, then I do give and appoint the same unto Edward Kent the younger, her son, to be paid unto him when he shall attain the age of one-and-twenty years.

“ *Item*, I do also give and appoint unto him the said Edward Kent, son of the said John, the sum of thirty pounds, towards putting him out as an apprentice, and to be paid and disposed of to that use when he shall be fit for it.

“ *Item*, I do give or appoint and dispose of unto Rose, Elizabeth, and Susanna, three other of the daughters of my said kinsman Thomas Hathaway, the sum of forty pounds a-piece, to be paid unto every of them at such time and in such manner as the said fifty pounds before appointed to the said Joan Kent, their sister, shall become payable.

“ *Item*, All the rest of the monies that shall be raised by such sale as aforesaid, I give and dispose of unto my said kinsman Edward Bagley, except five pounds only, which I give and appoint to my said trustee Henry Smith for his pains ; and if the said Edward Nash shall refuse the purchase of the said messuage and four-yard land and a half with the appurtenances, then my will and desire is, that the said Henry Smith or his heirs shall sell the inheritance of the said premises and every part thereof unto the said Edward Bagley, and that he shall purchase the same ; upon this condition, nevertheless, that he the said Edward Bagley, his heirs, executors, or administrators, shall justly and faithfully perform my will and true meaning, in making due payment of all the several sums of money or legacies before mentioned, in such manner as aforesaid, And I do hereby declare my will and meaning to be that the executors or administrators of my said husband Sir John Barnard shall have and enjoy the use and benefit of my said house in Stratford, called the New-Place, with the orchards, gardens, and all other the appurtenances thereto belonging, for and during the space of six months next after the decease of him the said Sir John Barnard.

“ *Item*, I give and devise unto my kinsman, Thomas Hart, the

“line.² My answer hath been, *Would he had blotted*

son of Thomas Hart, late of Stratford-upon-Avon aforesaid, all that my other message or inn situate in Stratford-upon-Avon aforesaid, commonly called the Maidenhead, with the appurtenances, and the next house thereunto adjoining, with the barn belonging to the same, now or late in the occupation of Michael Johnson or his assigns, with all and singular the appurtenances; to hold to him the said Thomas Hart the son, and the heirs of his body; and for default of such issue, I give and devise the same to George Hart, brother of the said Thomas Hart, and to the heirs of his body; and for default of such issue to the right heirs of me the said Elizabeth Barnard for ever.

“*Item*, I do make, ordain, and appoint my said loving kinsman Edward Bagley sole executor of this my last will and testament, hereby revoking all former wills; desiring him to see a just performance hereof, according to my true intent and meaning. In witness whereof I the said Elizabeth Barnard have hereunto set my hand and seal, the nine-and-twentieth day of January, Anno Domini, one thousand six hundred and sixty-nine.

“ELIZABETH BARNARD.

“*Signed, sealed, published, and declared to be the last will and testament of the said Elizabeth Barnard, in the presence of*

“John Howes, Rector de Abington.

“Francis Wickes.

“*Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud ædes Exonienses situat. in le Strand, in comitatu Middx. quarto die mensis Martij, 1669, coram venerabili viro Domino Egidio Sweete, milite et legum doctore, surrogato, &c. juramento Edwardi Bagley, unici executor. nominat. cui, &c. de bene, &c. jurat.*”

MALONE.

* — that in writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line.] This is not true. They only say in their preface to his plays, that “his mind and hand went together, and what he thought, he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.” On this Mr. Pope observes, that “there never was a more groundless report, or to the contrary of which there are more undeniable evidences. As, the comedy of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which he entirely new writ; *The History of Henry the Sixth*, which was first published under the title of *The Contention of York and Lancaster*; and that of *Henry V.* extremely improved; that of *Hamlet* enlarged to almost as much again as at first, and many others.”

“ a thousand! which they thought a malevolent
 “ speech. I had not told posterity this, but for

Surely this is a very strange kind of argument. In the first place this was not a *report*, (unless by that word we are to understand *relation*,) but a positive assertion, grounded on the best evidence that the nature of the subject admitted; namely, ocular proof. The players say, in substance, that Shakspeare had such a happiness of expression, that, as they collect from his papers, he had *seldom* occasion to alter the first words he had set down; in consequence of which they found *scarce* a blot in his writings. And how is this refuted by Mr. Pope? By telling us, that a great many of his plays were *enlarged* by their author. Allowing this to be true, which is by no means certain, if he had written twenty plays, each consisting of one thousand lines, and afterwards added to each of them a thousand more, would it therefore follow, that he had not written the first thousand with facility and correctness, or that those must have been necessarily *expunged*, because new matter was added to them? Certainly not.—But the truth is, it is by no means clear that our author did enlarge all the plays mentioned by Mr. Pope, if even that would prove the point intended to be established. Mr. Pope was evidently deceived by the quarto copies. From the play of *Henry V.* being more perfect in the folio edition than in the quarto, nothing follows but that the quarto impression of that piece was printed from a mutilated and imperfect copy, stolen from the theatre, or taken down by ear during the representation. What have been called the *quarto* copies of the Second and Third Parts of *King Henry VI.* were in fact two old plays written before the time of Shakspeare, and entitled *The First Part of the Contention of the two Houses of Yorke and Lancaster*, &c. and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of Yorke*, &c. on which he constructed two new plays; just as on the old plays of *King John*, and *The Taming of a Shrew*, he formed two other plays with nearly the same titles. See *The Dissertation in Vol. XIV.* p. 223.

The tragedy of *Hamlet* in the first edition, (*now extant*,) that of 1604, is said to be “enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect copy.” What is to be collected from this, but that there was a former *imperfect* edition (I believe, in the year 1602)? that the one we are now speaking of was enlarged to as much again as it was in the *former mutilated impression*, and that this is the genuine and perfect copy, the other imperfect and spurious?

“ their ignorance, who chose that circumstance to
 “ commend their friend by, wherein he most fault-
 “ ed: and to justify mine own candour, for I loved
 “ the man, and do honour his memory, on this side
 “ idolatry, as much as any. He was, indeed, ho-
 “ nest, and of an open and free nature, had an
 “ excellent fancy, brave notions, and gentle ex-
 “ pressions; wherein he flowed with that facility,
 “ that sometimes it was necessary he should be
 “ stopped: *Sufflaminandus erat*, as Augustus said
 “ of Haterius. His wit was in his own power;
 “ would the rule of it had been so too. Many
 “ times he fell into those things which could not
 “ escape laughter; as when he said in the person of
 “ Cæsar, one speaking to him,

‘ Cæsar, thou dost me wrong.’

“ He replied :

‘ Cæsar did never wrong, but with just cause.’

“ and such like, which were ridiculous. But he

The Merry Wives of Windsor, indeed, and *Romeo and Juliet*,
 and perhaps *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, our author appears to have
 altered and amplified; and to *King Richard II.* what is called
 the parliament-scene, seems to have been added; (though this
 last is by no means certain;) but neither will these augmenta-
 tions and new-modellings disprove what has been asserted by
 Shakspeare’s fellow-comedians concerning the facility of his
 writing, and the exquisite felicity of his first expressions.

The hasty sketch of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which he
 is said to have composed in a fortnight, he might have written
 without a blot; and three or four years afterwards, when he
 chose to dilate his plan, he might have composed the additional
 scenes without a blot likewise. In a word, supposing even that
 Nature had not endowed him with that rich vein which he un-
 questionably possessed, he who in little more than twenty years
 produces thirty-four or thirty-five pieces for the stage, has cer-
 tainly not much time for expunging. MALONE.

“redeemed his vices with his virtues; there was
 “ever more in him to be praised than to be par-
 “doned.”

As for the passage which he mentions out of Shakspeare, there is somewhat like it in *Julius Cæsar*, but without the absurdity; nor did I ever meet with it in any edition that I have seen as quoted by Mr. Jonson.³

Besides his plays in this edition, there are two or three ascribed to him by Mr. Langbaine,⁴ which

³ — nor did I ever meet with it in any edition that I have seen, as quoted by Mr. Jonson.] See Mr. Tyrwhitt's note on *Julius Cæsar*, Act III. sc. i. Vol. XVI. MALONE.

⁴ Besides his plays in this edition, there are two or three ascribed to him by Mr. Langbaine,] *The Birth of Merlin*, 1662, written by W. Rowley; the old play of *King John*, in two parts, 1591, on which Shakspeare formed his *King John*; and *The Arraignment of Paris*, 1584, written by George Peele.

The editor of the folio 1664, subjoined to the 36 dramas published in 1623, seven plays, four of which had appeared in Shakspeare's life-time with his name in the title-page, viz. *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*, 1609, *Sir John Oldcastle*, 1609, *The London Prodigal*, 1605, and *The Yorkshire Tragedy*, 1608; the three others which they inserted, *Lochrine*, 1595, *Lord Cromwell*, 1602, and *The Puritan*, 1607, having been printed with the initials W. S. in the title-page, the editor chose to interpret those letters to mean William Shakspeare, and ascribed them also to our poet. I published an edition of these seven pieces some years ago, freed in some measure from the gross errors with which they had been exhibited in ancient copies, that the publick might see what they contained; and do not hesitate to declare my firm persuasion that of *Lochrine*, *Lord Cromwell*, *Sir John Oldcastle*, *The London Prodigal*, and *The Puritan*, Shakspeare did not write a single line.

How little the booksellers of former times scrupled to affix the names of celebrated writers to the productions of others, even in the life-time of such celebrated authors, may be collected from Heywood's translations from Ovid, which in 1612, while Shakspeare was yet living, were ascribed to him. See Vol. X. p. 321, n. 1.* With the dead they would certainly

* Mr. Malone's edition of our author's works, 1790.

I have never seen, and know nothing of. He writ likewise *Venus and Adonis*, and *Tarquin and Lucrece*, in stanzas, which have been printed in a late collection of poems.⁵ As to the character given of him by Ben Jonson, there is a good deal true in it: but I believe it may be as well expressed by what Horace says of the first Romans, who wrote tragedy upon the Greek models, (or indeed translated them,) in his epistle to Augustus:

“ ——— naturâ sublimis & acer:

“ Nam spirat tragicum satis, et feliciter audet,

“ Sed turpem putat in chartis metuitque lituram.”

As I have not proposed to myself to enter into a large and complete criticism upon Shakspeare's works, so I will only take the liberty, with all due submission to the judgment of others, to observe some of those things I have been pleased with in looking him over.

His plays are properly to be distinguished only into comedies and tragedies. Those which are called histories, and even some of his comedies, are really tragedies, with a run or mixture of comedy

make still more free. “ This book (says Anthony Wood, speaking of a work to which the name of Sir Philip Sydney was prefixed) *coming out so late*, it is to be inquired whether Sir Philip Sydney's name is not set to it for sale-sake, being a usual thing in these days to set a great name to a book or books, by sharking booksellers, or snivelling writers, to get bread.” *Athen. Oxon.* Vol. I. p. 208. MALONE.

⁵ ——— *in a late collection of poems.*] In the fourth volume of *State Poems*, printed in 1707. Mr. Rowe did not go beyond *A Late Collection of Poems*, and does not seem to have known that Shakspeare also wrote 154 Sonnets, and a poem entitled *A Lover's Complaint*. MALONE.

amongst them.⁶ That way of tragi-comedy was the common mistake of that age, and is indeed be-

⁶ — are really tragedies, with a run or mixture of comedy, amongst them.] Heywood, our author's contemporary, has stated the best defence that can be made for his intermixing lighter with the more serious scenes of his dramas!

“It may likewise be objected, why amongst sad and grave histories I have here and there inserted fabulous jests and tales savouring of lightness. I answer, I have therein imitated our *historical, and comical poets*, that write to the stage, who, lest the auditory should be dulled with serious courses, which are merely weighty and material, in every act present some Zany, with his mimick action to breed in the less capable mirth and laughter; *for they that write to all, must strive to please all.* And as such fashion themselves to a multitude diversely addicted, so I to an universality of readers diversely disposed.” Pref. to *History of Women*, 1624. MALONE.

The criticks who renounce tragi-comedy as barbarous, I fear, speak more from notions which they have formed in their closets, than any well-built theory deduced from experience of what pleases or displeases, which ought to be the foundation of all rules.

Even supposing there is no affectation in this refinement, and that those criticks have really tried and purified their minds till there is no dross remaining, still this can never be the case of a popular audience, to which a dramattick representation is referred.

Dryden in one of his prefaces condemns his own conduct in *The Spanish Friar*; but, says he, I did not write it to please myself, it was given to the publick. Here is an involuntary confession that tragi-comedy is more pleasing to the audience; I would ask then, upon what ground it is condemned?

This ideal excellence of uniformity rests upon a supposition that we are either more refined, or a higher order of beings than we really are: there is no provision made for what may be called the animal part of our minds.

Though we should acknowledge this passion for variety and contrarieties to be the vice of our nature, it is still a propensity which we all feel, and which he who undertakes to divert us must find provision for.

We are obliged, it is true, in our pursuit after science, or excellence in any art, to keep our minds steadily fixed for a long continuance; it is a task we impose on ourselves: but I do not wish to task myself in my amusements.

If the great object of the theatre is amusement, a dramattick

come so agreeable to the English taste, that though the severer criticks among us cannot bear it, yet the generality of our audiences seem to be better pleased with it than with an exact tragedy. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *The Taming of a Shrew*, are all pure comedy; the rest, however they are called, have something of both kinds. It is not very easy to determine which way of writing he was most excellent in. There is certainly a great deal of entertainment in his comical humours; and though they did not then strike at all ranks of people, as the satire of the present age has taken the liberty to do, yet there is a pleasing and a well-distinguished variety in those characters which he thought fit to meddle with. Falstaff is allowed by every body to be a masterpiece; the character is always well sustained, though drawn out into the length of three plays; and even the account of his death given by his old landlady Mrs. Quickly, in the first Act of *Henry the Fifth*, though it be extremely natural, is yet as diverting as any part of his life. If there be any fault in the draught he has made of this lewd old fellow, it is, that though he has made him a thief, lying, cowardly, vain-glorious, and in short every way vicious, yet he has given him so much wit as to make him almost too agreeable; and I do not know whether

work must possess every means to produce that effect; if it gives instruction by the by, so much its merit is the greater; but that is not its principal object. The ground on which it stands, and which gives it a claim to the protection and encouragement of civilised society, is not because it enforces moral precepts, or gives instruction of any kind; but from the general advantage that it produces, by habituating the mind to find its amusement in intellectual pleasures; weaning it from sensuality, and by degrees filing off, smoothing, and polishing, its rugged corners.

SIR J. REYNOLDS.

some people have not, in remembrance of the diversion he had formerly afforded them, been sorry to see his friend Hal use him so scurvily, when he comes to the crown in the end of *The Second Part of Henry the Fourth*. Amongst other extravagancies, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* he has made him a deer-stealer, that he might at the same time remember his Warwickshire prosecutor, under the name of Justice Shallow; he has given him very near the same coat of arms which Dugdale, in his *Antiquities* of that county, describes for a family there,⁷ and makes the Welsh parson descant very pleasantly upon them. That whole play is admirable; the humours are various and well opposed; the main design, which is to cure Ford of his unreasonable jealousy, is extremely well conducted. In *Twelfth-Night* there is something singularly ridiculous and pleasant in the fantastical steward Malvolio. The parasite and the vain-glorious in Parolles, in *All's well that ends well*, is as good as any thing of that kind in Plautus or Terence. Petruchio, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, is an uncommon piece of humour. The conversation of Benedick and Beatrice, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, and of Rosalind, in *As you like it*, have much wit and sprightliness all along. His clowns, without which character there was hardly any play writ in that time, are all very entertaining: and, I believe,

⁷ — the same coat of arms which Dugdale, in his *Antiquities of that county, describes for a family there,*] There are two coats, I observe, in Dugdale, where three silver fishes are borne in the name of *Lucy*; and another coat to the monument of Thomas Lucy, son of Sir William Lucy, in which are quartered in four several divisions, twelve little fishes, three in each division, probably *lucies*. This very coat, indeed, seems alluded to in Shallow's giving the *dozen white lucies*; and in Slender's saying *he may quarter*. THEOBALD.

Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida*, and Apemantus in *Timon*, will be allowed to be master-pieces of ill-nature, and satirical snarling. To these I might add, that incomparable character of Shylock the Jew, in *The Merchant of Venice*; but though we have seen that play received and acted as a comedy,⁸ and the part of the Jew performed by an excellent comedian, yet I cannot but think it was designed tragically by the author. There appears in it such a deadly spirit of revenge, such a savage fierceness and fellness, and such a bloody designation of cruelty and mischief, as cannot agree either with the style or characters of comedy. The play itself, take it altogether, seems to me to be one of the most finished of any of Shakspeare's. The tale, indeed, in that part relating to the caskets, and the extravagant and unusual kind of bond given by Antonio, is too much removed from the rules of probability; but taking the fact for granted, we must allow it to be very beautifully written. There is something in the friendship of Antonio to Bassanio very great, generous, and tender. The whole fourth Act (supposing, as I said, the fact to be probable,) is extremely fine. But there are two passages that deserve a particular notice. The first is, what Portia says in praise of mercy, and the other on the

⁸ — but though we have seen that play received and acted as a comedy,] In 1701 Lord Lansdown produced his alteration of *The Merchant of Venice*, at the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, under the title of *The Jew of Venice*, and expressly calls it a comedy. Shylock was performed by Mr. Dogget. REED.

And such was the bad taste of our ancestors that this piece continued to be a stock-play from 1701 to Feb. 14, 1741, when *The Merchant of Venice* was exhibited for the first time at the theatre in Drury-Lane, and Mr. Macklin made his first appearance in the character of Shylock. MALONE.

power of musick. The melancholy of Jaques, in *As you like it*, is as singular and odd as it is diverting. And if, what Horace says,

“ Difficile est proprie communia dicere,”

it will be a hard task for any one to go beyond him in the description of the several degrees and ages of man’s life, though the thought be old, and common enough.

“ — All the world’s a stage,
 “ And all the men and women merely players ;
 “ They have their exits and their entrances,
 “ And one man in his time plays many parts,
 “ His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,
 “ Mewling and puking in the nurse’s arms ;
 “ And then, the whining school-boy with his satchel,
 “ And shining morning face, creeping like snail
 “ Unwillingly to school. And then, the lover
 “ Sighing like furnace, with a woful ballad
 “ Made to his mistress’ eye-brow. Then, a soldier ;
 “ Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
 “ Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
 “ Seeking the bubble reputation
 “ Ev’n in the cannon’s mouth. And then, the justice ;
 “ In fair round belly, with good capon lin’d,
 “ With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
 “ Full of wise saws and modern instances ;
 “ And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
 “ Into the lean and slipper’d pantaloon ;
 “ With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side ;
 “ His youthful hose, well sav’d, a world too wide
 “ For his shrunk shank ; and his big manly voice,
 “ Turning again tow’rd childish treble, pipes
 “ And whistles in his sound : Last scene of all,
 “ That ends this strange eventful history,
 “ Is second childishness, and mere oblivion ;
 “ Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing.”

His images are indeed every where so lively, that the thing he would represent stands full before you, and you possess every part of it. I will venture to

point out one more, which is, I think, as strong and as uncommon as any thing I ever saw; it is an image of Patience. Speaking of a maid in love, he says,

“ — She never told her love,
 “ But let concealment, like a worm i'th' bud,
 “ Feed on her damask cheek: she pin'd in thought,
 “ And sate like *Patience* on a monument,
 “ Smiling at *Grief*.”

What an image is here given! and what a task would it have been for the greatest masters of Greece and Rome to have expressed the passions designed by this sketch of statuary! The style of his comedy is, in general, natural to the characters, and easy in itself; and the wit most commonly sprightly and pleasing, except in those places where he runs into doggrel rhymes, as in *The Comedy of Errors*, and some other plays. As for his jingling sometimes, and playing upon words, it was the common vice of the age he lived in: and if we find it in the pulpit, made use of as an ornament to the sermons of some of the gravest divines of those times, perhaps it may not be thought too light for the stage.

But certainly the greatness of this author's genius does no where so much appear, as where he gives his imagination an entire loose, and raises his fancy to a flight above mankind, and the limits of the visible world. Such are his attempts in *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*. Of these, *The Tempest*, however it comes to be placed the first by the publishers of his works, can never have been the first written by him: it seems to me as perfect in its kind, as almost any thing we have of his. One may observe, that the

unities are kept here, with an exactness uncommon to the liberties of his writing; though that was what, I suppose, he valued himself least upon, since his excellencies were all of another kind. I am very sensible that he does, in this play, depart too much from that likeness to truth which ought to be observed in these sort of writings; yet he does it so very finely, that one is easily drawn in to have more faith for his sake, than reason does well allow of. His magick has something in it very solemn and very poetical: and that extravagant character of Caliban is mighty well sustained, shows a wonderful invention in the author, who could strike out such a particular wild image, and is certainly one of the finest and most uncommon grotesques that ever was seen. The observation, which, I have been informed, three very great men concurred in making⁹ upon this part, was extremely just; that *Shakspeare had not only found out a new character in his Caliban, but had also devised and adapted a new manner of language for that character.*

It is the same magick that raises the Fairies in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, the Witches in *Macbeth*, and the Ghost in *Hamlet*, with thoughts and language so proper to the parts they sustain, and so peculiar to the talent of this writer. But of the two last of these plays I shall have occasion to take

⁹ — which, I have been informed, three very great men concurred in making —] Lord Falkland, Lord C. J. Vaughan, and Mr. Selden. ROWE.

Dryden was of the same opinion. “His person (says he, speaking of Caliban,) is monstrous, as he is the product of unnatural lust, and *his language is as hobgoblin as his person*: in all things he is distinguished from other mortals.” Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*. MALONE.

notice, among the tragedies of Mr. Shakspeare. If one undertook to examine the greatest part of these by those rules which are established by Aristotle, and taken from the model of the Grecian stage, it would be no very hard task to find a great many faults; but as Shakspeare lived under a kind of mere light of nature, and had never been made acquainted with the regularity of those written precepts, so it would be hard to judge him by a law he knew nothing of. We are to consider him as a man that lived in a state of almost universal licence and ignorance: there was no established judge, but every one took the liberty to write according to the dictates of his own fancy. When one considers, that there is not one play before him of a reputation good enough to entitle it to an appearance on the present stage, it cannot but be a matter of great wonder that he should advance dramattick poetry so far as he did. The fable is what is generally placed the first, among those that are reckoned the constituent parts of a tragick or heroick poem; not, perhaps, as it is the most difficult or beautiful, but as it is the first properly to be thought of in the contrivance and course of the whole; and with the fable ought to be considered the fit disposition, order, and conduct of its several parts. As it is not in this province of the drama that the strength and mastery of Shakspeare lay, so I shall not undertake the tedious and ill-natured trouble to point out the several faults he was guilty of in it. His tales were seldom invented, but rather taken either from the true history, or novels and romances: and he commonly made use of them in that order, with those incidents, and that extent of time in which he found them in the authors from whence he borrowed them. So *The Winter's Tale*,

which is taken from an old book, called *The Delectable History of Dorastus and Fawnia*, contains the space of sixteen or seventeen years, and the scene is sometimes laid in Bohemia, and sometimes in Sicily, according to the original order of the story. Almost all his historical plays comprehend a great length of time, and very different and distinct places: and in his *Antony and Cleopatra*, the scene travels over the greatest part of the Roman empire. But in recompence for his carelessness in this point, when he comes to another part of the drama, *the manners of his characters, in acting or speaking what is proper for them, and fit to be shown by the poet*, he may be generally justified, and in very many places greatly commended. For those plays which he has taken from the English or Roman history, let any man compare them, and he will find the character as exact in the poet as the historian. He seems indeed so far from proposing to himself any one action for a subject, that the title very often tells you, it is *The Life of King John, King Richard, &c.* What can be more agreeable to the idea our historians give of *Henry the Sixth*, than the picture Shakspeare has drawn of him? His manners are every where exactly the same with the story; one finds him still described with simplicity, passive sanctity, want of courage, weakness of mind, and easy submission to the governance of an imperious wife, or prevailing faction: though at the same time the poet does justice to his good qualities, and moves the pity of his audience for him, by showing him pious, disinterested, a contemner of the things of this world, and wholly resigned to the severest dispensations of God's providence. There is a short scene in *The Second Part of Henry the Sixth*, which I cannot but think admirable in its kind. Cardinal Beaufort,

who had murdered the Duke of Gloucester, is shown in the last agonies on his death-bed, with the good king praying over him. There is so much terror in one, so much tenderness and moving piety in the other, as must touch any one who is capable either of fear or pity. In his *Henry the Eighth*, that prince is drawn with that greatness of mind, and all those good qualities which are attributed to him in any account of his reign. If his faults are not shown in an equal degree, and the shades in this picture do not bear a just proportion to the lights, it is not that the artist wanted either colours or skill in the disposition of them; but the truth, I believe, might be, that he forbore doing it out of regard to Queen Elizabeth, since it could have been no very great respect to the memory of his mistress, to have exposed some certain parts of her father's life upon the stage. He has dealt much more freely with the minister of that great king; and certainly nothing was ever more justly written, than the character of Cardinal Wolsey. He has shown him insolent in his prosperity; and yet, by a wonderful address, he makes his fall and ruin the subject of general compassion. The whole man, with his vices and virtues, is finely and exactly described in the second scene of the fourth Act. The distresses likewise of Queen Katharine, in this play, are very movingly touched; and though the art of the poet has screened King Henry from any gross imputation of injustice, yet one is inclined to wish, the Queen had met with a fortune more worthy of her birth and virtue. Nor are the manners, proper to the persons represented, less justly observed, in those characters taken from the Roman history; and of this, the fierceness and impatience of Coriolanus, his courage and disdain of the common people, the virtue and philosophical temper of Brutus, and the

irregular greatness of mind in M. Antony, are beautiful proofs. For the two last especially, you find them exactly as they are described by Plutarch, from whom certainly Shakspeare copied them. He has indeed followed his original pretty close, and taken in several little incidents that might have been spared in a play. But, as I hinted before, his design seems most commonly rather to describe those great men in the several fortunes and accidents of their lives, than to take any single great action, and form his work simply upon that. However, there are some of his pieces, where the fable is founded upon one action only. Such are more especially, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*. The design in *Romeo and Juliet* is plainly the punishment of their two families, for the unreasonable feuds and animosities that had been so long kept up between them, and occasioned the effusion of so much blood. In the management of this story, he has shown something wonderfully tender and passionate in the love-part, and very pitiful in the distress. *Hamlet* is founded on much the same tale with the *Electra* of Sophocles. In each of them a young prince is engaged to revenge the death of his father, their mothers are equally guilty, are both concerned in the murder of their husbands,¹ and are afterwards married to the murderers. There is in the first part of the Greek tragedy something very moving in the grief of *Electra*; but, as Mr. Dacier has observed, there is something very unnatural and shocking in the manners he has given that princess and *Orestes* in the latter part. *Orestes* imbrues his hands in the blood of his own mother;

¹ — are both concerned in the murder of their husbands.] It does not appear that *Hamlet's* mother was concerned in the death of her husband. MALONE.

and that barbarous action is performed, though not immediately upon the stage, yet so near, that the audience hear Clytemnestra crying out to Ægysthus for help, and to her son for mercy: while Electra her daughter, and a princess, (both of them characters that ought to have appeared with more decency,) stands upon the stage, and encourages her brother in the parricide. What horror does this not raise! Clytemnestra was a wicked woman, and had deserved to die; nay, in the truth of the story, she was killed by her own son; but to represent an action of this kind on the stage, is certainly an offence against those rules of manners proper to the persons, that ought to be observed there. On the contrary, let us only look a little on the conduct of Shakspeare. Hamlet is represented with the same piety towards his father, and resolution to revenge his death, as Orestes; he has the same abhorrence for his mother's guilt, which, to provoke him the more, is heightened by incest: but it is with wonderful art and justness of judgment, that the poet restrains him from doing violence to his mother. To prevent any thing of that kind, he makes his father's Ghost forbid that part of his vengeance:

“ But howsoever thou pursu'st this act,
 “ Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
 “ Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven,
 “ And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
 “ To prick and sting her.”

This is to distinguish rightly between *horror* and *terror*. The latter is a proper passion of tragedy, but the former ought always to be carefully avoided. And certainly no dramatick writer ever succeeded better in raising *terror* in the minds of an audience than Shakspeare has done. The whole

tragedy of *Macbeth*, but more especially the scene where the King is murdered, in the second Act, as well as this play, is a noble proof of that manly spirit with which he writ; and both show how powerful he was, in giving the strongest motions to our souls that they are capable of. I cannot leave *Hamlet*, without taking notice of the advantage with which we have seen this master-piece of Shakspeare distinguish itself upon the stage, by Mr. Betterton's fine performance of that part. A man, who, though he had no other good qualities, as he has a great many, must have made his way into the esteem of all men of letters, by this only excellency. No man is better acquainted with Shakspeare's manner of expression, and indeed he has studied him so well, and is so much a master of him, that whatever part of his he performs, he does it as if it had been written on purpose for him, and that the author had exactly conceived it as he plays it. I must own a particular obligation to him, for the most considerable part of the passages relating to this life, which I have here transmitted to the publick; his veneration for the memory of Shakspeare having engaged him to make a journey into Warwickshire on purpose to gather up what remains he could, of a name for which he had so great a veneration.²

² — of a name for which he had so great a veneration.] Mr. Betterton was born in 1635, and had many opportunities of collecting information relative to Shakspeare, but unfortunately the age in which he lived was not an age of curiosity. Had either he or Dryden or Sir William D'Avenant taken the trouble to visit our poet's youngest daughter, who lived till 1662, or his grand-daughter, who did not die till 1670, many particulars might have been preserved which are now irrecoverably lost. Shakspeare's sister, Joan Hart, who was only five years younger than him, died at Stratford in Nov. 1646, at the age of seventy-

*To the foregoing Accounts of SHAKSPEARE'S LIFE,
I have only one Passage to add, which Mr. Pope
related, as communicated to him by Mr. Rowe.*

IN the time of Elizabeth, coaches being yet uncommon, and hired coaches not at all in use, those who were too proud, too tender, or too idle to walk, went on horseback to any distant business or diversion. Many came on horseback to the play,³ and when Shakspeare fled to London from the terror of a criminal prosecution, his first expedient was to wait at the door of the playhouse, and hold the horses of those that had no servants, that they might be ready again after the performance. In this office he became so conspicuous for his care

six; and from her undoubtedly his two daughters, and his granddaughter Lady Barnard, had learned several circumstances of his early history antecedent to the year 1600. MALONE.

This *Account of the Life of Shakspeare* is printed from Mr. Rowe's second edition, in which it had been abridged and altered by himself after its appearance in 1709. STEEVENS.

³ *Many came on horseback to the play,*] Plays were at this time performed in the afternoon. "The pollicie of plaies is very necessary, howsoever some shallow-brained censurers (not the deepest searchers into the secrets of government) mightily opugne them. For whereas *the afternoon* being the idlest time of the day wherein men that are their own masters (as gentlemen of the court, the innes of the court, and a number of captains and soldiers about London) do wholly bestow themselves upon pleasure, and that pleasure they divide (how vertuously it skills not) either in gaming, following of harlots, drinking, or seeing a play, is it not better (since of four extreames all the world cannot keepe them but they will choose one) that they should betake them to the least, which is plaies?" Nash's *Pierce Pennilesse his Supplication to the Devil*, 1592. STEEVENS.

and readiness, that in a short time every man as he alighted called for Will. Shakspeare, and scarcely any other waiter was trusted with a horse while Will. Shakspeare could be had. This was the first dawn of better fortune. Shakspeare, finding more horses put into his hand than he could hold, hired boys to wait under his inspection, who, when Will. Shakspeare was summoned, were immediately to present themselves, *I am Shakspeare's boy, Sir.* In time, Shakspeare found higher employment: but as long as the practice of riding to the play-house continued, the waiters that held the horses retained the appellation of, *Shakspeare's boys.*⁴

JOHNSON.

⁴ ——— *the waiters that held the horses retained the appellation of, Shakspeare's boys.*] I cannot dismiss this anecdote without observing that it seems to want every mark of probability. Though Shakspeare quitted Stratford on account of a juvenile irregularity, we have no reason to suppose that he had forfeited the protection of his father who was engaged in a lucrative business, or the love of his wife who had already brought him two children, and was herself the daughter of a substantial yeoman. It is unlikely therefore, when he was beyond the reach of his prosecutor, that he should conceal his plan of life, or place of residence, from those who, if he found himself distressed, could not fail to afford him such supplies as would have set him above the necessity of *holding horses* for subsistence. Mr. Malone has remarked in his *Attempt to ascertain the Order in which the Plays of Shakspeare were written*, that he might have found an easy introduction to the stage; for Thomas Green, a celebrated comedian of that period, was his townsman, and perhaps his relation. The genius of our author prompted him to write poetry; his connection with a player might have given his productions a dramatick turn; or his own sagacity might have taught him that fame was not incompatible with profit, and that the theatre was an avenue to both. That it was once the general custom to ride on horse-back to the play, I am likewise yet to learn. The most popular of the theatres were on the Bankside; and we are told by the satirical pamphleteers of that time, that the usual mode of conveyance to these places of amusement, was by water, but

Mr. Rowe has told us, that he derived the principal anecdotes in his account of Shakspeare, from Betterton the player, whose zeal had induced him to visit Stratford, for the sake of procuring all possible intelligence concerning a poet to whose works he might justly think himself under the strongest

not a single writer so much as hints at the custom of riding to them, or at the practice of having horses held during the hours of exhibition. Some allusion to this usage, (if it had existed) must, I think, have been discovered in the course of our researches after contemporary fashions. Let it be remembered too, that we receive this tale on no higher authority than that of Cibber's *Lives of the Poets*, Vol. I. p. 130. "Sir William Davenant told it to Mr. Betterton, who communicated it to Mr. Rowe," who (according to Dr. Johnson) related it to Mr. Pope. Mr. Rowe (if this intelligence be authentick) seems to have concurred with me in opinion, as he forbore to introduce a circumstance so incredible into his *Life of Shakspeare*. As to the book which furnishes the anecdote, not the smallest part of it was the composition of Mr. Cibber, being entirely written by a Mr. Shiells, amanuensis to Dr. Johnson, when his Dictionary was preparing for the press. T. Cibber was in the King's Bench, and accepted of ten guineas from the booksellers for leave to prefix his name to the work; and it was purposely so prefixed as to leave the reader in doubt whether himself or his father was the person designed.

The foregoing anecdote relative to Cibber's *Lives*, &c. I received from Dr. Johnson. See, however, *The Monthly Review*, for December, 1781, p. 409. STEEVENS.

Mr. Steevens in one particular is certainly mistaken. To the theatre in Blackfriars I have no doubt that many gentlemen rode in the time of Queen Elizabeth and King James I. From the Strand, Holborn, Bishopsgate Street, &c. where many of the nobility lived, they could indeed go no other way than on foot, or on horseback, or in coaches; and coaches till after the death of Elizabeth were extremely rare. Many of the gentry, therefore, certainly went to that playhouse on horseback. See the proofs, in the Essay above referred to.

This, however, will not establish the tradition relative to our author's first employment at the playhouse, which stands on a very slender foundation. MALONE.

obligations. Notwithstanding this assertion, in the manuscript papers of the late Mr. Oldys it is said, that one Bowman (according to Chetwood, p. 143, "an actor more than half an age on the London theatres") was unwilling to allow that his associate and contemporary Betterton had ever undertaken such a journey.⁵ Be this matter as it will, the following particulars, which I shall give in the words of Oldys, are, for aught we know to the contrary, as well authenticated as any of the anecdotes delivered down to us by Rowe.

Mr. Oldys had covered several quires of paper with laborious collections for a regular life of our author. From these I have made the following extracts, which (however trivial) contain the only

⁵ — it is said, that one Bowman—was unwilling to allow that his associate and contemporary Betterton had ever undertaken such a journey.] This assertion of Mr. Oldys is altogether unworthy of credit. Why any doubt should be entertained concerning Mr. Betterton's having visited Stratford, after Rowe's positive assertion that he did so, it is not easy to conceive. Mr. Rowe did not go there himself; and how could he have collected the few circumstances relative to Shakspeare and his family, which he has told, if he had not obtained information from some friend who examined the Register of the parish of Stratford, and made personal inquiries on the subject?

"Bowman," we are told, "was unwilling to believe," &c. But the fact disputed did not require any exercise of his *belief*. Mr. Bowman was married to the daughter of Sir Francis Watson, Bart. the gentleman with whom Betterton joined in an adventure to the East Indies, whose name the writer of Betterton's *Life in Biographia Britannica* has so studiously concealed. By that unfortunate scheme Betterton lost above 2000*l.* Dr. Ratcliffe 6000*l.* and Sir Francis Watson his whole fortune. On his death soon after the year 1692, Betterton generously took his daughter under his protection, and educated her in his house. Here Bowman married her; from which period he continued to live in the most friendly correspondence with Mr. Betterton, and must have *known* whether he went to Stratford or not. MALONE.

circumstances that wear the least appearance of novelty or information; the song in p. 62 excepted.

“ If tradition may be trusted, Shakspeare often baited at the Crown Inn or Tavern in Oxford, in his journey to and from London. The landlady was a woman of great beauty and sprightly wit, and her husband, Mr. John Davenant, (afterwards mayor of that city,) a grave melancholy man; who, as well as his wife, used much to delight in Shakspeare’s pleasant company. Their son young Will. Davenant (afterwards Sir William) was then a little school-boy in the town, of about seven or eight years old,⁶ and so fond also of Shakspeare, that whenever he heard of his arrival, he would fly from school to see him. One day an old townsman observing the boy running homeward almost out of breath, asked him whither he was posting in that heat and hurry. He answered, to see his *god-father* Shakspeare. There’s a good boy, said the other, but have a care that you don’t take *God’s* name in vain. This story Mr. Pope told me at the Earl of Oxford’s table, upon occasion of some discourse which arose about Shakspeare’s monument then newly erected in Westminster Abbey;⁷

⁶ — of about seven or eight years old,] He was born at Oxford in February 1605-6. MALONE.

⁷ — Shakspeare’s monument then newly erected in Westminster Abbey;] “ This monument,” says Mr. Granger, was erected in 1741, by the direction of the Earl of Burlington, Dr. Mead, Mr. Pope, and Mr. Martyn. Mr. Fleetwood and Mr. Rich gave each of them a benefit towards it, from one of Shakspeare’s own plays. It was executed by H. Scheemaker, after a design of Kent.

“ On the monument is inscribed—*amor publicus posuit*. Dr. Mead objected to *amor publicus*, as not occurring in old classical

and he quoted Mr. Betterton the player for his authority. I answered, that I thought such a story might have enriched the variety of those choice

inscriptions; but Mr. Pope and the other gentlemen concerned insisting that it should stand, Dr. Mead yielded the point, saying,

“*Omnia vincit amor, nos et cedamus amori.*”

“This anecdote was communicated by Dr. Lort, late Greek Professor of Cambridge, who had it from Dr. Mead himself.”

It was recorded at the time in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for Feb. 1741, by a writer who objects to every part of the inscription, and says it ought to have been, “*G. S. centum viginti et quatuor post obitum annis populus plaudens [aut favens] posuit.*”

The monument was opened Jan. 29, 1741. Scheemaker is said to have got 300*l.* for his work. The performers at each house, much to their honour, performed *gratis*; and the Dean and Chapter of Westminster took nothing for the ground. The money received by the performance at Drury Lane, amounted to above 200*l.* the receipts at Covent Garden to about 100*l.* These particulars I learn from Oldys's MS. notes on Langbaine.

The scroll on the monument, as I learn from a letter to my father, dated June 27, 1741, remained for some time after the monument was set up, without any inscription on it. This was a challenge to the wits of the time; which one of them accepted by writing a copy of verses, the subject of which was a conversation supposed to pass between Dr. Mead and Sir Thomas Hanmer, relative to the filling up of the scroll. I know not whether they are in print, and I do not choose to quote them all. The introductory lines, however, run thus:

“To learned Mead thus Hanmer spoke,

“Doctor, this empty scroll's a joke.

“Something it doubtless should contain,

“Extremely short, extremely plain;

“But wondrous deep, and wondrous pat,

“And fit for Shakspeare to point at;” &c. MALONE.

At Drury Lane was acted *Julius Cæsar*, 28 April, 1738, when a prologue written by Benjamin Martyn, Esq. was spoken by Mr. Quin, and an epilogue by James Noel, Esq. spoken by Mrs. Porter. Both these are printed in *The General Dictionary*. At Covent Garden was acted *Hamlet*, 10th April, 1739, when a prologue written by Mr. Theobald, and printed in *The London Magazine* of that year, was spoken by Mr. Ryan. In the newspaper of the day it was observed that this last representation was far from being numerous attended. REED.

fruits of observation he has presented us in his preface to the edition he had published of our poet's works. He replied—"There might be in the garden of mankind such plants as would seem to pride themselves more in a regular production of their own native fruits, than in having the repute of bearing a richer kind by grafting; and this was the reason he omitted it."⁸

The same story, without the names of the persons, is printed among the jests of John Taylor the Water-poet, in his works, folio, 1630, p. 184, N^o 39: and, with some variations, may be found in one of Hearne's pocket books.⁹

⁸—[and this was the reason he omitted it.] Mr. Oldys might have added, that *he* was the person who suggested to Mr. Pope the singular course which he pursued in his edition of Shakspeare. "Remember," says Oldys in a MS. note to his copy of Langbaine, Article, Shakspeare, "what I observed to my Lord Oxford for Mr. Pope's use, out of Cowley's preface." The observation here alluded to, I believe, is one made by Cowley in his preface, p. 53, edit. 1710, 8vo: "This has been the case with Shakspeare, Fletcher, Jonson, and many others, part of whose poems I should presume to take the boldness to *prune and lop away*, if the care of *replanting them in print* did belong to me; neither would I make any scruple to cut off from some the unnecessary young suckers, and from others the old withered branches; for a great wit is no more tied to live in a vast volume, than in a gigantick body: on the contrary it is commonly more vigorous the less space it animates, and as Statius says of little Tydeus,—

"———— totos infusa per artus,

"Major in exiguo regnabat corpore virtus."

Pope adopted this very unwarrantable idea; striking out from the text of his author whatever he did not like: and Cowley himself has suffered a sort of poetical punishment for having suggested it, the learned Bishop of Worcester [Dr. Hurd] having *pruned and lopped away* his beautiful luxuriances, as Pope, on Cowley's suggestion, did those of Shakspeare. MALONE.

⁹ *The same story—may be found in one of Hearne's pocket books.*] Antony Wood is the first and original author of the anecdote.

“ One of Shakspeare’s younger brothers,¹ who

dote that Shakspeare, in his journies from Warwickshire to London, used to bait at the Crown-Inn on the west side of the corn market in Oxford. He says, that D’Avenant the poet was born in that house in 1606. “ His father (he adds) John Davenant, was a sufficient vintner, kept the tavern now known by the sign of the *Crown*, and was mayor of the said city in 1621. His mother was a very beautiful woman, of a good wit and conversation, in which she was imitated by none of her children but by this *William* [the poet]. The father, who was a very grave and discreet citizen, (yet an admirer and lover of plays and play-makers, especially *Shakspeare*, who frequented his house in his journies between Warwickshire and London,) was of a melancholick disposition, and was seldom or never seen to laugh, in which he was imitated by none of his children but by Robert his eldest son, afterwards fellow of St. John’s College, and a venerable Doctor of Divinity.” Wood’s *Ath. Oxon.* Vol. II. p. 292, edit. 1692. I will not suppose that Shakspeare could have been the father of a Doctor of Divinity who never laughed; but it was always a constant tradition in Oxford that Shakspeare was the father of Davenant the poet. And I have seen this circumstance expressly mentioned in some of Wood’s papers. Wood was well qualified to know these particulars; for he was a townsman of Oxford, where he was born in 1632. Wood says, that Davenant went to school in Oxford. *Ubi supr.*

As to the *Crown Inn*, it still remains as an inn, and is an old decayed house, but probably was once a principal inn in Oxford. It is directly in the road from Stratford to London. In a large upper room, which seems to have been a sort of *Hall* for entertaining a large company, or for accommodating (as was the custom) different parties at once, there was a bow-window, with three pieces of excellent painted glass. About eight years ago, I remember visiting this room, and proposing to purchase of the landlord the painted glass, which would have been a curiosity as coming from Shakspeare’s inn. But going thither soon after, I found it was removed; the inn-keeper having communicated my intended bargain to the owner of the house, who began to suspect that he was possessed of a curiosity too valuable to be parted with, or to remain in such a place: and I never could hear of it afterwards. If I remember right, the painted glass consisted of three armorial shields beautifully stained. I have said so much on this subject, because I think that Shakspeare’s old hostelry at Oxford deserves no less respect than Chaucer’s Tabarde in Southwark. T. WARTON.

which he was seated among some company, who were eating, and one of them sung a song." See the character of *Adam*, in *As you like it*, Act II. sc. ult.

“ Verses by Ben Jonson and Shakspeare, occasioned by the motto to the Globe Theatre—*Totus mundus agit histrionem*.

Jonson.

‘ If, but *stage actors*, all the world displays,
‘ Where shall we find *spectators* of their plays?’

Shakspeare.

‘ Little, or much, of what we see, we do;
‘ We are all both *actors* and *spectators* too.’

Poetical Characteristicks, 8vo. MS. Vol. I. some time in the Harleian Library; which volume was returned to its owner.”

“ Old Mr. Bowman the player reported from Sir William Bishop, that some part of Sir John Falstaff’s character was drawn from a townsman of Stratford, who either faithlessly broke a contract, or spitefully refused to part with some land for a valuable consideration, adjoining to Shakspeare’s, in or near that town.”

To these anecdotes I can only add the following.

At the conclusion of the advertisement prefixed to Lintot’s edition of Shakspeare’s Poems, it is said, “ That most learned prince and great patron of learning, King James the First, was pleased with

his own hand to write an amicable letter to Mr. Shakspeare; which letter, though now lost, remained long in the hands of Sir William D'Avenant,³ as a credible person now living can testify."

Mr. Oldys, in a MS. note to his copy of Fuller's *Worthies*, observes, that "the story came from the Duke of Buckingham, who had it from Sir William D'Avenant."

It appears from *Roscius Anglicanus*, (commonly called Downes the prompter's book,) 1708, that Shakspeare took the pains to instruct Joseph Taylor in the character of *Hamlet*, and John Lowine in that of *King Henry VIII*. STEEVENS.

The late Mr. Thomas Osborne, bookseller, (whose exploits are celebrated by the author of the *Dunciad*,) being ignorant in what form or language our *Paradise Lost* was written, employed one of his garretteers to render it from a French translation into English prose. Lest, hereafter, the compositions of Shakspeare should be brought back into their native tongue from the version of Monsieur le Compte de Catuelan, le Tourneur, &c. it may be necessary to observe, that all the following particulars, extracted from the preface of these gentlemen, are as little founded in truth as their description of the ridiculous Jubilee at Stratford,

³ — which letter, though now lost, remained long in the hands of Sir William D'Avenant.] Dr. Farmer with great probability supposes that this letter was written by King James in return for the compliment paid to him in *Macbeth*. The relater of this anecdote was *Sheffield*, Duke of Buckingham.

MALONE.

which they have been taught to represent as an affair of general approbation and national concern.

They say, that Shakspeare came to London without a plan, and finding himself at the door of a theatre, instinctively stopped there, and offered himself to be a holder of horses:—that he was remarkable for his excellent performance of the Ghost in *Hamlet*:—that he borrowed nothing from preceding writers:—that all on a sudden he left the stage, and returned without eclat into his native country:—that his monument at Stratford is of copper:—that the courtiers of James I. paid several compliments to him which are still preserved:—that he relieved a widow, who, together with her numerous family, was involved in a ruinous lawsuit:—that his editors have restored many passages in his plays, by the assistance of the manuscripts he left behind him, &c. &c.

Let me not, however, forget the justice due to these ingenious Frenchmen, whose skill and fidelity in the execution of their very difficult undertaking, is only exceeded by such a display of candour as would serve to cover the imperfections of much less elegant and judicious writers. STEEVENS.

STRATFORD REGISTER.

BAPTISMS, MARRIAGES, and BURIALS, of the Shakspeare Family; transcribed from the Register-Books of the Parish of Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire.⁴

JONE,⁵ daughter of John Shakspeare, was baptized Sept. 15, 1558.

Margaret, daughter of John Shakspeare, was buried April 30, 1563.

WILLIAM, Son of John Shakspeare, was baptized April 26, 1564.⁶

Johanna, daughter of Richard Hathaway, otherwise Gardiner, of Shottery,⁷ was baptized May 9, 1566.

⁴ An inaccurate and very imperfect list of the baptisms, &c. of Shakspeare's family was transmitted by Mr. West about eighteen years ago to Mr. Steevens. The list now printed I have extracted with great care from the Registers of Stratford; and I trust, it will be found correct. MALONE.

⁵ This lady Mr. West supposed to have married the ancestor of the Harts of Stratford; but he was certainly mistaken. She died probably in her infancy. The wife of Mr. Hart was undoubtedly the *second* Jone, mentioned below. Her son Michael was born in the latter end of the year 1608, at which time she was above thirty-nine years old. The elder Jone would then have been near fifty. MALONE.

⁶ He was born three days before, April 23, 1564. MALONE.

⁷ This Richard Hathaway of Shottery was probably the father to *Anne Hathaway*, our poet's wife. There is no entry of her baptism, the Register not commencing till 1558, two years after she was born. Thomas, the son of this Richard Hathaway,

Gilbert, son of John Shakspeare, was baptized Oct. 13, 1566.

Jone,⁸ daughter of John Shakspeare, was baptized April 15, 1569.

Anne, daughter of Mr. John Shakspeare, was baptized Sept. 28, 1571.

Richard, son of Mr. John Shakspeare, was baptized March 11, 1573. [1573-4.]

Anne, daughter of Mr. John Shakspeare, was buried April 4, 1579.

Edmund, son of Mr. John Shakspeare, was baptized May 3, 1580.

Susanna, daughter of WILLIAM SHAKSPERE, was baptized May 26, 1583.

Elizabeth, daughter of Anthony Shakspeare, of Hampton,⁹ was baptized February 10, 1583. [1583-4.]

was baptized at Stratford, April 12, 1569; John, another son, Feb. 3, 1574; and William, another son, Nov. 30, 1578.

MALONE.

* It was common in the age of Queen Elizabeth to give the same christian name to two children successively. (Thus, Mr. Sadler, who was godfather to Shakspeare's son, had two sons who were baptized by the name of *John*. See note 1.) This was undoubtedly done in the present instance. The former Jone having probably died, (though I can find no entry of her burial in the Register, nor indeed of many of the other children of John Shakspeare) the name of Jone, a very favourite one in those days, was transferred to another new-born child. This latter Jone married Mr. William Hart, a hatter in Stratford, some time, as I conjecture, in the year 1599, when she was thirty years old; for her eldest son William was baptized there, August 28, 1600. There is no entry of her marriage in the Register. MALONE.

⁹ There was also a Mr. *Henry* Shakspeare settled at Hampton-Lucy, as appears from the Register of that parish:

1522—Lettice, daughter of Henry Shakspeare, was baptized.

1585—James, son of Henry Shakspeare, was baptized.

1589—James, son of Henry Shakspeare, was buried.

There was a *Thomas* Shakspeare settled at Warwick; for in

John Shakspeare and Margery Roberts were married Nov. 25, 1584.

Hamnet¹ and Judith, son and daughter of WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE, were baptized February 2, 1584. [1584-5.]

Margery, wife of John Shakspeare, was buried Oct. 29, 1587.

the Rolls Chapel I found the enrolment of a deed made in the 44th year of Queen Elizabeth, conveying "to Thomas Shakspeare of Warwick, yeoman, Sachbroke, *alias* Bishop-Sachbroke, in Com. Warw." MALONE.

¹ Mr. West imagined that our poet's only son was christened by the name of *Samuel*, but he was mistaken. Mr. Hamnet Sadler, who was related, if I mistake not, to the Shakspeare family, appears to have been sponsor for his son; and his wife, Mrs. Judith Sadler, to have been godmother to Judith, the other twin-child. The name *Hamnet* is written very distinctly both in the entry of the baptism and burial of this child. *Hamnet* and *Hamlet* seem to have been considered as the same name, and to have been used indiscriminately both in speaking and writing. Thus, this Mr. Hamnet Sadler, who is a witness to Shakspeare's Will, writes his christian name, *Hamnet*; but the scrivener who drew up the will, writes it *Hamlet*. There is the same variation in the Register of Stratford, where the name is spelt in three or four different ways. Thus, among the baptisms we find, in 1591, "May 26, John, filius *Hamletti* Sadler;" and in 1583, "Sept. 13, Margaret, daughter to *Hamlet* Sadler." But in 1588, Sept. 20, we find "John, son to *Hamnet* Sadler;" in 1596, April 4, we have "Judith, filia *Hamnet* Sadler;" in 1597-8, "Feb. 3, Wilhelmus, filius *Hambnet* Sadler;" and in 1599, "April 23, Francis, filius *Hamnet* Sadler." This Mr. Sadler died in 1624, and the entry of his burial stands thus: "1624, Oct. 26, *Hamlet* Sadler." So also in that of his wife: "1623, March 23, Judith, uxor *Hamlet* Sadler."

The name of Hamlet occurs in several other entries in the Register. Oct. 4, 1576, "*Hamlet*, son to Humphry Holdar," was buried; and Sept. 28, 1564, "Catharina, uxor *Hamoletti* Hassal." Mr. *Hamlet* Smith, formerly of the borough of Stratford, is one of the benefactors annually commemorated there.

Our poet's only son, Hamnet, died in 1596, in the twelfth year of his age. MALONE.

Thomas,² son of Richard Queeny, was baptized
Feb. 26, 1588. [1588-9.]

Ursula,³ daughter of John Shakspeare, was baptized
March 11, 1588. [1588-9.]

Thomas Greene, *alias* Shakspeare,⁴ was buried
March 6, 1589. [1589-90.]

² This gentleman married our poet's youngest daughter. He had three sisters, Elizabeth, Anne, and Mary, and five brothers; Adrian, born in 1586, Richard, born in 1587, William, born in 1593, John in 1597, and George, baptized April 9, 1600. George was curate of the parish of Stratford, and died of a consumption. He was buried there April 11, 1624. In Doctor Hall's pocket-book is the following entry relative to him: "38, Mr. Quiney, tussi gravi cum magna phlegmatis copia, et cibi vomitu, feb. lenta debilitatus," &c. The case concludes thus: "Anno seq. (no year is mentioned in the case, but the preceding case is dated 1624,) in hoc malum incidēbat. Multa frustra tentata;—placide cum Domino dormit. Fuit boni indolis, et pro juveni omnifariam doctus." MALONE.

³ This Ursula, and her brothers, Humphrey and Philip, appear to have been the children of John Shakspeare by Mary, his third wife, though no such marriage is entered in the Register. I have not been able to learn her surname, or in what church she was married. She died in Sept. 1608.

It has been suggested to me that the John Shakspeare here mentioned was an elder brother of our poet, (not his father,) born, like Margaret Shakspeare, before the commencement of the Register: but had this been the case, he probably would have been called John *the younger*, old Mr. Shakspeare being alive in 1589. I am therefore of opinion that our poet's father was meant, and that he was thrice married. MALONE.

⁴ A great many names occur in this Register, with an *alias*, the meaning of which it is not very easy to ascertain. I should have supposed that the persons thus described were illegitimate, and that this Thomas Greene was the son of one of our poet's kinsmen, by a daughter of Thomas Greene, Esq. a gentleman who resided in Stratford; but that in the Register we frequently find the word *bastard* expressly added to the names of the children baptized. Perhaps this latter form was only used in the case of servants, labourers, &c. and the illegitimate offspring of the higher order was more delicately denoted by an *alias*.

The Rev. Mr. Davenport observes to me that there are two

- Humphrey, son of John Shakspere, was baptized
May 24, 1590.
- Philip, son of John Shakspere, was baptized Sept.
21, 1591.
- Thomas,⁵ son of Mr. Anthony Nash, was baptized
June 20, 1593.
- Hamnet, son of WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE, was buried
Aug. 11, 1596.
- William, son of William Hart, was baptized Aug.
28, 1600.
- Mr. John Shakspeare was buried Sept. 8, 1601.
- Mr. Richard Quiney,⁶ Bailiff of Stratford, was
buried May 31, 1602.
- Mary, daughter of William Hart, was baptized
June 5, 1603.
- Thomas, son of William Hart, latter, was baptized
July 24, 1605.
- John Hall, gentleman, and Susanna Shakspere,
were married June 5, 1607.

families at present in Stratford, (and probably several more) that are distinguished by an *alias*. "The real name of one of these families is *Roberts*, but they generally go by the name of *Burford*. The ancestor of the family came originally from Burford in Oxfordshire, and was frequently called from this circumstance by the name of Burford. This name has prevailed, and they are always now called by it; but they write their name, Roberts, *alias* Burford, and are so entered in the Register.

"The real name of the other family is Smith, but they are more known by the name of *Buck*. The ancestor of this family, from some circumstance or other, obtained the nickname of *Buck*, and they now write themselves, Smith, *alias* Buck."

MALONE.

⁵ This gentleman married our poet's grand-daughter, Elizabeth Hall. His father, Mr. Anthony Nash, lived at Welcombe, (where he had an estate,) as appears by the following entry of the baptism of another of his sons: "1598, Oct. 15, John, son to Mr. Anthony Nash, of *Welcombe*." MALONE.

⁶ This was the father of Mr. Thomas Quiney, who married Shakspeare's youngest daughter. MALONE.

Mary, daughter of William Hart, was buried Dec. 17, 1607.

Elizabeth, daughter of John Hall, gentleman, was baptized Feb. 21, 1607. [1607-8.]

Mary Shakspeare, widow, was buried Sept. 9, 1608.

Michael, son of William Hart, was baptized Sept. 23, 1608.

Gilbert Shakspeare, adolescens,⁷ was buried Feb. 3, 1611. [1611-12.]

Richard Shakspeare, was buried February 4, 1612. [1612-13.]

Thomas Queeny and Judith Shakspeare⁸ were married Feb. 10, 1615. [1615-16.]

William Hart,⁹ hatter, was buried April 17, 1616.

⁷ This was probably a son of Gilbert Shakspeare, our poet's brother. When the elder Gilbert died, the Register does not inform us; but he certainly died before his son. MALONE.

⁸ This lady, who was our poet's youngest daughter, appears to have married without her father's knowledge, for he mentions her in his will as unmarried. Mr. West, as I have already observed, was mistaken in supposing she was married in Feb. 1616, that is, in 1616-17. She was certainly married before her father's death. See a former note in p. 92, in which the entry is given exactly as it stands in the Register.

As Shakspeare the poet married his wife from Shottery, Mr. West conjectured he might have become possessed of a remarkable *house*, and jointly with his wife conveyed it as a part of their daughter Judith's portion to Thomas Queeny. "It is certain," Mr. West adds, "that one Queeny, an elderly gentleman, sold it to — Harvey, Esq. of Stockton, near Southam, Warwickshire, father of John Harvey Thursby, Esq. of Abington, near Northampton; and that the aforesaid Harvey sold it again to Samuel Tyler, Esq. whose sisters, as his heirs, now enjoy it."

But how could Shakspeare have conveyed this house, if he ever owned it, to Mr. Queeny, as a marriage portion with his daughter, concerning whom there is the following clause in his will, executed one month before his death: "Provided that if such husband as she *shall* at the end of the said three years be married unto," &c. MALONE.

⁹ This William Hart was our poet's brother-in-law. He died, it appears, a few days before Shakspeare. MALONE.

- WILLIAM SHAKSPERE,¹ gentleman, was buried April 25,² 1616.
- Shakspere, son of Thomas Quiney, gentleman, was baptized Nov. 23, 1616.
- Shakspere, son of Thomas Quiney, gentleman, was buried May 8, 1617.
- Richard, son of² Thomas Quiney, was baptized Feb. 9, 1617. [1617-18.]
- Thomas, son of Thomas Quiney, was baptized Aug. 29, 1619.
- Anthony Nash, Esq.³ was buried Nov. 18, 1622.
- Mrs. Shakspere⁴ was buried Aug. 8, 1623.
- Mr. Thomas Nash was married to Mrs. Elizabeth Hall, April 22, 1626.
- Thomas,⁵ son of Thomas Hart, was baptized April 13, 1634.
- Dr. John Hall,⁶ ["*medicus peritissimus,*"] was buried Nov. 26, 1635.

¹ He died, as appears from his monument, April 23d.

MALONE.

² No one hath protracted the *Life of Shakspeare* beyond 1616, except Mr. Hume; who is pleased to add a year to it, contrary to all manner of evidence. FARMER.

³ Father of Mr. Thomas Nash, the husband of Elizabeth Hall.

MALONE.

⁴ This lady, who was the poet's widow, and whose maiden name was Anne Hathaway, died, as appears from her tomb-stone (see p. 61, n. 9.) at the age of 67, and consequently was near eight years older than her husband. I have not been able to ascertain when or where they were married, but suspect the ceremony was performed at Hampton-Lucy, or Billesley, in August, 1582. The register of the latter parish is lost. MALONE.

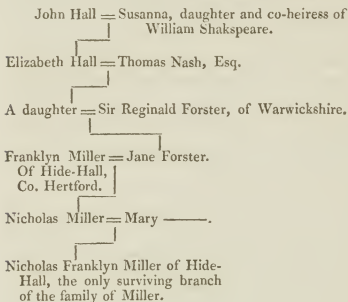
⁵ It appears from Lady Barnard's will that this Thomas Hart was alive in 1669. The Register does not ascertain the time of his death, nor that of his father. MALONE.

⁶ It has been supposed that the family of Miller of Hide-Hall,

George, son of Thomas Hart, was baptized Sept. 18, 1636.

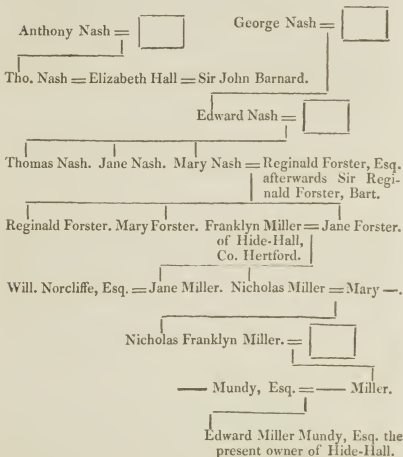
Thomas, son of Thomas Quiney, was buried Jan. 28, 1638. [1638-9.]

in the county of Herts, were descended from Dr. Hall's daughter Elizabeth; and to prove this fact, the following pedigree was transmitted some years ago by Mr. Whalley to Mr. Steevens:



But this pedigree is founded on a mistake, and there is undoubtedly no lineal descendant of Shakspeare now living. The mistake was, the supposing that Sir Reginald Forster married a daughter of Mr. Thomas Nash and Elizabeth Hall, who had no issue, either by that gentleman or her second husband, Sir John Barnard. Sir Reginald Forster married the daughter of Edward Nash, Esq. of East Greenwich, in the county of Kent, cousin-german to Mr. Thomas Nash; and the pedigree ought to have been formed thus:

Richard, son of Thomas Quiney, was buried Feb. 26, 1638. [1638-9.]



That I am right in this statement, appears from the will of Edward Nash, (see p. 96, n. 8.) and from the following inscription on a monument in the church of Stratford, erected some time after the year 1733, by Jane Norcliffe, the wife of William Norcliffe, Esq. and only daughter of Franklyn Miller, by Jane Forster :

“ P. M. S.

“ Beneath lye interred the body’s of Sir Reginald Forster, Baronet, and dame *Mary* his wife, daughter of *Edward* Nash of East Greenwich, in the county of Kent,” &c. For this inscrip-

William Hart⁷ was buried March 29, 1639.

Mary, daughter of Thomas Hart, was baptized June 18, 1641.

Joan Hart, widow, was buried Nov. 4, 1646.

Thomas Nash, Esq. was buried April 5, 1647.

Mrs. Susanna Hall, widow, was buried July 16, 1649.

Mr. Richard Queeny,⁸ gent. of London, was buried May 23, 1656.

George Hart, son of Thomas Hart, was married by Francis Smyth, Justice of peace, to Hester Ludiate, daughter of Thomas Ludiate, Jan. 9, 1657. [1657-8.]

tion I am indebted to the kindness of the Rev. Mr. Davenport, Vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon.

Reginald Forster, Esq. who lived at Greenwich, was created a Baronet, May 4, 1661. His son Reginald, who married Miss Nash, succeeded to the title on the death of his father, some time after the year 1679. Their only son, Reginald, was buried at Stratford, Aug. 10, 1685.

Mrs. Elizabeth Nash was married to her second husband, Sir John Barnard, at Billesley, about three miles from Stratford-upon-Avon, June 5, 1649, and was buried at Abington in the county of Northampton, Feb. 17, 1669-70; and with her the family of our poet became extinct. MALONE.

⁷ The eldest son of Joan Hart, our poet's sister. I have not found any entry in the Register of the deaths of his brothers Thomas and Michael Hart. The latter, I suspect, settled in London, and was perhaps the father of Charles Hart, the celebrated tragedian, who, I believe, was born about the year 1630. MALONE.

⁸ This gentleman was born in 1587, and was brother to Thomas Quiney, who married Shakspeare's youngest daughter. It does not appear when Thomas Quiney died. There is a defect in the Register during the years 1642, 1643, and 1644; and another *lacuna* from March 17, to Nov. 18, 1663. Our poet's son-in-law probably died in the latter of those periods; for his wife, who died in Feb. 1661-2, in the Register of Burials for that year is described thus: "Judith, *uxor* Thomas Quiney." Had her husband been then dead, she would have been denominated *vidua*. MALONE.

- Elizabeth, daughter of George Hart, was baptized Jan. 9, 1658. [1658-9.]
- Jane, daughter of George Hart, was baptized Dec. 21, 1661.
- Judith, wife of Thomas Quiney, gent. was buried Feb. 9, 1661. [1661-62.]
- Susanna, daughter of George Hart, was baptized March 18, 1663. [1663-4.]
- Shakspeare, son of George Hart, was baptized Nov. 18, 1666.
- Mary, daughter of George Hart, was baptized March 31, 1671.
- Thomas, son of George Hart, was baptized March 3, 1673. [1673-4.]
- George, son of George Hart, was baptized Aug. 20, 1676.
- Margaret Hart,⁹ widow, was buried Nov. 28, 1682.
- Daniel Smith and Susanna Hart were married April 16, 1688.
- Shakspeare Hart was married to Anne Prew, April 10, 1694.
- William Shakspeare, son of Shakspeare Hart, was baptized Sept. 14, 1695.
- Hester, wife of George Hart, was buried April 29, 1696.
- Anne, daughter of Shakspeare and Anne Hart, was baptized Aug. 9, 1700.
- George, son of George and Mary Hart, was baptized Nov. 29, 1700.
- George Hart¹ was buried May 3, 1702.
- Hester, daughter of George Hart, was baptized Feb. 10, 1702. [1702-3.]

⁹ Probably the wife of Thomas Hart, who must have been married in or before the year 1633. The marriage ceremony was not performed at Stratford, there being no entry of it in the Register. MALONE.

¹ He was born in 1636. MALONE.

Catharine, daughter of Shakspeare and Anne Hart, was baptized July 19, 1703.

Mary, daughter of George Hart, was baptized Oct. 7, 1705.

Mary, wife of George Hart, was buried Oct. 7, 1705.

George Hart was married to Sarah Mountford, Feb. 20, 1728. [1728-9.]

Thomas,² son of George Hart, Jun. was baptized May 9, 1729.

Sarah, daughter of George Hart, was baptized Sept. 29, 1733.

Anne, daughter of Shakspeare Hart, was buried March 29, 1738.

Anne, daughter of George Hart, was baptized Sept. 29, 1740.

William Shakspeare, son of William Shakspeare Hart, was baptized Jan. 8, 1743. [1743-4.]

William Shakspeare, son of William Shakspeare Hart, was buried March 8, 1744. [1744-5.]

William, son of George Hart, was buried April 28, 1745.

George Hart³ was buried Aug. 29, 1745.

Thomas, son of William Shakspeare Hart, was buried March 12, 1746. [1746-7.]

Shakspeare Hart⁴ was buried July 7, 1747.

Catharine, daughter of William Shakspeare Hart, was baptized May 10, 1748.

* This Thomas Hart, who is the fifth in descent from Joan Hart, our poet's sister, is now (1788) living at Stratford, in the house in which Shakspeare was born. MALONE.

² He was born in 1676, and was great grandson to Joan Hart. MALONE.

⁴ He was born in 1666, and was also great grandson to Joan Hart. MALONE.

William Shakspeare Hart⁵ was buried Feb. 28,
1749. [1749-50.]

The widow Hart⁶ was buried July 10, 1753.

John, son of Thomas Hart, was baptized Aug. 18,
1755.

Anne, daughter of Shakspeare and Anne Hart,
was buried Feb. 5, 1760.

Frances, daughter of Thomas Hart, was baptized
Aug. 8, 1760.

Thomas, son of Thomas Hart, was baptized Aug.
10, 1764.

Anne, daughter of Thomas Hart, was baptized
Jan. 16, 1767.

Sarah, daughter of George Hart, was buried Sept.
10, 1768.

Frances, daughter of Thomas Hart, was buried
Oct. 31, 1774.

George Hart⁷ was buried July 8, 1778.

⁵ He was born in 1695. MALONE.

⁶ This absurd mode of entry seems to have been adopted for the purpose of concealment rather than information; for by the omission of the christian name, it is impossible to ascertain from the Register who was meant. The person here described was, I believe, Anne, the widow of Shakspeare Hart, who died in 1747. MALONE.

⁷ He was born in 1700. MALONE.

SHAKSPEARE'S COAT OF ARMS.

The following Instrument is copied from the Original in the College of Heralds: It is marked G. 13, p. 349.*

TO all and singuler noble and gentlemen of all estats and degrees, bearing arms, to whom these presents shall come, William Dethick, Garter, Principall King of Arms of England, and William Camden, alias Clarencieulx, King of Arms for the south, east, and west parts of this realme, sendethe greeting. Know ye, that in all nations and kingdoms the record and remembraunce of the valeant facts and vertuous dispositions of worthie men have been made knowne and divulged by certeyne shields of arms and tokens of chevalrie; the grant and testimonie whereof apperteyneth unto us, by vertu of our offices from the Quenes most Exc. Majestie, and her Highenes most noble and victorious progenitors: wherefore being solicited, and by credible report informed, that John Shak-

* In the Herald's Office are the first draughts of John Shakspeare's grant or confirmation of arms, by William Dethick, Garter, Principal King at Arms, 1596. See Vincent's *Press*, Vol. 157, No. 23, and 4. STEEVENS.

In a Manuscript in the College of Heralds, marked W. 2. p. 276, is the following note: "As for the *speare in bend*, it is a patible difference, and the person to whom it was granted hath borne magistracy, and was justice of peace at Stratford-upon-Avon. He married the daughter and heire of *Arderne*, and was able to maintain that estate." MALONE.

speare, now of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the countie of Warwick, gent. whose parent, great grandfather, and late antecessor, for his faithfull and approved service to the late most prudent prince, king Henry VII. of famous memorie, was advaunced and rewarded with lands and tenements, geven to him in those parts of Warwickshere, where they have continewed by some descents in good reputation and credit; and for that the said John Shakspeare having maryed the daughter and one of the heys of Robert Arden of Wellingcote, in the said countie, and also produced this his auncient cote of arms, heretofore assigned to him whilest he was her Majesties officer and baylefe of that towne;⁹ In consideration of the premisses, and for the encouragement of his posteritie, unto whom suche blazon of arms and achievements of inheritance from theyre said mother, by the auncyent custome and lawes of arms, maye lawfully descend; We the said Garter and Clarencieulx have assigned, graunted, and by these presents exemplied unto the said John Shakspeare, and to his posteritie, that shield and cote of arms, *viz. In a field of gould upon a bend sables a speare of the first, the poynt upward, hedded argent*; and for his crest or cognisance, *A falcon with his wyngs displayed, standing on a wrethe of his coullers, supporting a speare armed hedded, or steeled sylver*, fyxed upon a helmet with mantell and tassels, as more playnely maye appeare depected on this margent; and we have likewise upon on other escutchcon impaled the same with the aun-

⁹ — *his auncient cote of arms, heretofore assigned to him whilest he was her Majesties officer and baylefe of that towne;*] This grant of arms was made by — Cook, Clarencieux, in 1569, but is not now extant in the Herald's Office.

MALONE.

cyent arms of the said Arden¹ of Wellingcote; signifieng therby, that it maye and shalbe lawfull for the said John Skakspeare gent. to beare and use the same shield of arms, single or impaled, as aforsaid, during his natural lyffe; and that it shalbe lawfull for his children, yssue, and posteryte, (lawfully begotten,) to beare, use, and quarter, and show forth the same, with theyre dewe differences, in all lawfull warlyke facts and civile use or exercises, according to the laws of arms, and custome that to gentlemen belongethe, without let or interruption of any person or persons, for use or bearing the same. In wyttnesse and testemonye whereof we have subscribed our names, and fastened the seals of our offices, geven at the Office of Arms, London, the
 day of _____ in the xlii yere of the reigne
 of our most gracious Sovraigne lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God, quene of England, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c. 1599.

¹ — and we have likewise—impaled the same with the aun-
 cyent arms of the said Arden —] It is said by Mr. Jacob, the
 modern editor of *Arden of Feversham*, (first published in 1592
 and republished in 1631 and 1770) that Shakspeare descended by
 the female line from the gentleman whose unfortunate end is the
 subject of this tragedy. But the assertion appears to want sup-
 port, the true name of the person who was murdered at Fever-
 sham being *Ardern* and not *Arden*. *Ardern* might be called
Arden in the play for the sake of better sound, or might be cor-
 rupted in the *Chronicle* of Holinshed: yet it is unlikely that the
 true spelling should be overlooked among the Heralds, whose
 interest it is to recommend by ostentatious accuracy the trifles
 in which they deal. STEEVENS.

Ardern was the original name, but in Shakspeare's time it had
 been softened to *Arden*. See p. 58, n. 5. MALONE.



*Shakspeares Autograph, if it had been written
on Paper, would have appeared thus*

W^m Chakspere

MORTGAGE

MADE BY SHAKSPEARE,

A. D. 1612-13.

THE following is a transcript of a deed executed by our author three years before his death. The original deed, which was found in the year 1768, among the title deeds of the Rev. Mr. Featherstonhaugh, of Oxted, in the county of Surry, is now in the possession of Mrs. Garrick, by whom it was obligingly transmitted to me through the hands of the Hon. Mr. Horace Walpole. Much has lately been said in various publications relative to the proper mode of spelling Shakspeare's name. It is hoped we shall hear no more idle babble upon this subject. He spelt his name himself as I have just now written it, without the middle *e*. Let this therefore for ever decide the question.

It should be remembered that to all ancient deeds were appended labels of parchment, which were inserted at the bottom of the deed; on the upper part of which labels thus rising above the rest of the parchment, the executing parties wrote their names. Shakspeare, not finding room for the whole of his name on the label, attempted to write the remaining letters at top, but having allowed himself only room enough to write the letter *a*, he gave the matter up. His hand-writing, of which a *fac-simile* is annexed, is much neater than many others, which I have seen, of that age. He neglected, however, to scrape the parchment, in consequence of which the letters appear imperfectly formed.

He purchased the estate here mortgaged, from

Henry Walker, for 140l. as appears from the enrolment of the deed of bargain and sale now in the Rolls-Chapel, dated the preceding day, March 10, 1612-13. The deed here printed shows that he paid down eighty pounds of the purchase-money, and mortgaged the premises for the remainder. This deed and the purchase deed were probably both executed on the same day, (March 10,) like our modern conveyance of Lease and Release. MALONE.

THIS INDENTURE made the eleventh day of March, in the yeares of the reigne of our Sovereigne Lorde James, by the grace of God, king of England, Scotland, Fraunce, and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c. that is to say, of England, Fraunce and Ireland the tenth, and of Scotland the six-and-fortieth; Between William Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the Countie of Warwick, gentleman, William Johnson, Citizen and Vintener of London, John Jackson, and John Hemyng of London, gentlemen, of thone partie, and Henry Walker, Citizen and Minstrell of London, of thother partie; Witnesseth, that the said William Shakspeare, William Johnson, John Jackson, and John Hemyng, have demised, graunted, and to ferme letten, and by theis presents do demise, graunt, and to ferme lett unto the said Henry Walker, all that dwelling house or tenement, with thappurtenants, situate and being within the precinct, circuit and compasse of the late Black ffryers, London, sometymes in the tenure of James Gardyner, Esquire, and since that in the tenure of John Fortescue, gent. and now or late being in the tenure or occupation of one William Ireland, or of his assignee or assignees; abutting upon a streete leading downe to Puddle Wharfe, on the east part, right

against the kings Majesties Wardrobe; part of which said tenement is erected over a greate gate leading to a capitall messuage, which sometye was in the tenure of William Blackwell, Esquire, deceased, and since that in the tenure or occupation of the right honourable Henry now Earle of Northumberlande: And also all that plott of ground on the west side of the same tenement, which was lately inclosed with boords on two sides thereof, by Anne Baton, widow, so farre and in such sorte as the same was inclosed by the said Anne Baton, and not otherwise; and being on the third side inclosed with an old brick wall; which said plott of ground was sometye parcell and taken out of a great voyde peece of ground lately used for a garden; and also the soyle whereupon the said tenement standeth; and also the said brick wall and boords which doe inclose the said plott of ground; with free entrie, accesse, ingresse, and regresse, in, by, and through, the said great gate and yarde there, unto the usual dore of the said tenement: And also all and singular cellors, sollers, romes, lights, easiements, profitts, commodities, and appurtenaunts whatsoever to the said dwelling-house or tenement belonging or in any wise apperteyning: **TO HAVE** and to **HOLDE** the said dwelling-house or tenement, cellers, sollers, romes, plott of ground, and all and singular other the premisses above by theis presents mentioned to bee demised, and every part and parcell thereof, with thappurtenaunts, unto the the said Henry Walker, his executors, administrators, and assignes, from the feast of thannunciation of the blessed Virgin Marye next coming after the date hereof, unto thende and terme of One hundred yeares from thence next ensuing,

and fullie to be compleat and ended, without impeachment of, or for, any manner of waste: YELDING and paying therefore yearlie during the said terme unto the said William Shakespeare, William Johnson, John Jackson, and John Hemmyng, their heires and assignes, a pepper corne at the feast of Easter yearly, yf the same be lawfullie demaunded, and noe more. PROVIDED always, that if the said William Shakespeare, his heires, executors, administrators or assignes, or any of them, doe well and trulie paie or cause to be paid to the said Henry Walker, his executors, administrators, or assignes, the sum of threescore pounds of lawfull money of England, in and upon the nyne and twentieth day of September next coming after the date hereof, at, or in, the nowe dwelling-house of the said Henry Walker, situate and being in the parish of Saint Martyn neer Ludgate, of London, at one entier payment without delaie; That then and from thenesforth this presente lease, demise and graunt, and all and every matter and thing herein conteyned (other then this provisoe) shall cease, determine, and bee utterlie voyde, frustrate, and of none effect, as though the same had never beene had, ne made; theis presents or any thing therein conteyned to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding. And the said William Shakespeare for himselfe, his heires, executors, and administrators, and for every of them, doth covenaut, promisse and graunt to, and with, the said Henry Walker, his executors, administrators and assignes, and everie of them, by theis presentes, that he the said William Shakespeare, his heires, executors, administrators or assignes, shall and will cleerlie acquite, exonerate and discharge, or from tyme to tyme, and at all tymes

hereafter, well and sufficientlie save and keepe harmless the said Henry Walker, his executors, administrators, and assignes, and every of them, and the said premisses by theis presents demised, and every parcell thereof, with thappurtenaunts, of and from all and al manner of former and other bargaynes, sales, guiftes, graunts, leases, jointures, dowers, intailles, statuts, recognizaunces, judgments, executions; and of, and from, all and every other charge, titles, troubles, and incumbrances whatsoever by the said William Shakspeare, William Johnson, John Jackson, and John Hemyng, or any of them, or by their or any of their meanes, had made, committed or done, before thensealing and delivery of theis presents, or hereafter before the said nyne and twentieth day of September next comming after the date hereof, to bee had, made, committed or done, except the rents and servits to the cheef lord or lords of the fee or fees of the premisses, for, or in respect of, his or their segnorie or seignories onlie, to bee due and done.

IN WITNESSE whereof the said parties to theis indentures interchangeablie have sett their seales. Yeoven the day and years first above writen, 1612 [1612-13.]

^a
W^m Shakspe. W^m Johnson. Jo. Jackson.
Ensealed and delivered by the
said William Shakspeare,
William Johnson, and John
Jackson,² in the presence of

Will. Atkinson.	Robert Andrews, Scr. ³
Ed. Oudry.	Henry Lawrence, Ser- vant to the said Scr.

² John Hemyng did not sign, or seal. MALONE.

³ i. e. Scrivener. MALONE.

SHAKSPEARE'S WILL,

FROM THE ORIGINAL

In the Office of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.

Vicesimo quinto die Martii,⁴ Anno Regni Domini nostri Jacobi nunc Regis Angliæ, &c. decimo quarto, et Scotiæ quadragesimo nono. Anno Domini 1616.

IN the name of God, Amen. I William Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, gent. in perfect health and memory, (God be praised!) do make and ordain this my last will and testament in manner and form following; that is to say:

First, I commend my soul into the hands of God my creator, hoping, and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting; and my body to the earth whereof it is made.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter Judith, one hundred and fifty pounds of lawful English money, to be paid unto her in manner and form following; that is to say, one hundred pounds

⁴ Our poet's will appears to have been drawn up in February, though not executed till the following month; for *February* was first written, and afterwards struck out, and *March* written over it. MALONE.

in discharge of her marriage portion within one year after my decease, with consideration after the rate of two shillings in the pound for so long time as the same shall be unpaid unto her after my decease; and the fifty pounds residue thereof, upon her surrendering of, or giving of such sufficient security as the overseers of this my will shall like of, to surrender or grant, all her estate and right that shall descend or come unto her after my decease, or that she now hath, of, in, or to, one copyhold tenement, with the appurtenances, lying and being in Stratford-upon-Avon aforesaid, in the said county of Warwick, being parcel or holden of the manor of Rowington, unto my daughter Susanna Hall, and her heirs for ever.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my said daughter Judith one hundred and fifty pounds more, if she, or any issue of her body, be living at the end of three years next ensuing the day of the date of this my will, during which time my executors to pay her consideration from my decease according to the rate aforesaid: and if she die within the said term without issue of her body, then my will is, and I do give and bequeath one hundred pounds thereof to my niece⁵ Elizabeth Hall, and the fifty pounds to be set forth by my executors during the life of my sister Joan Hart, and the use and profit thereof coming, shall be paid to my said sister Joan, and after her decease the said fifty pounds shall remain amongst the children of my said sister, equally to be divided amongst them; but if my

⁵ ——— to my niece —] Elizabeth Hall was our poet's granddaughter. So, in *Othello*, Act I. sc. i. Iago says to Brabantio; "You'll have your *nephews* neigh to you;" meaning his grandchildren. See the note there. MALONE.

said daughter Judith be living at the end of the said three years, or any issue of her body, then my will is, and so I devise and bequeath the said hundred and fifty pounds to be set out by my executors and overseers for the best benefit of her and her issue, and the stock not to be paid unto her so long as she shall be married and covert baron; but my will is, that she shall have the consideration yearly paid unto her during her life, and after her decease the said stock and consideration to be paid to her children, if she have any, and if not, to her executors or assigns, she living the said term after my decease: provided that if such husband as she shall at the end of the said three years be married unto, or at any [time] after, do sufficiently assure unto her, and the issue of her body, lands answerable to the portion by this my will given unto her, and to be adjudged so by my executors and overseers, then my will is, that the said hundred and fifty pounds shall be paid to such husband as shall make such assurance, to his own use.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my said sister Joan twenty pounds, and all my wearing apparel, to be paid and delivered within one year after my decease; and I do will and devise unto her the house, with the appurtenances, in Stratford, wherein she dwelleth, for her natural life, under the yearly rent of twelve-pence.

Item, I give and bequeath unto her three sons, William Hart, — Hart,⁶ and Michael Hart,

⁶ — *Hart*,] It is singular that neither Shakspeare nor any of his family should have recollected the christian name of his nephew, who was born at Stratford but eleven years before the making of his will. His christian name was *Thomas*; and he was baptized in that town, July 24, 1605. MALONE.

five pounds apiece, to be paid within one year after my decease.

Item, I give and bequeath unto the said Elizabeth Hall all my plate, (except my broad silver and gilt bowl,⁷) that I now have at the date of this my will.

Item, I give and bequeath unto the poor of Stratford aforesaid ten pounds; to Mr. Thomas Combe⁸ my sword; to Thomas Russel, esq. five pounds; and to Francis Collins⁹ of the borough of Warwick, in the county of Warwick, gent. thirteen pounds six shillings and eight-pence, to be paid within one year after my decease.

⁷ — *except my broad silver and gilt bowl,*] This bowl, as we afterwards find, our poet bequeathed to his daughter Judith. Instead of *bowl*, Mr. Theobald, and all the subsequent editors, have here printed *boxes*. MALONE.

Mr. Malone meant—*boxes*; but he has charged us all with having printed *boxes*, which we most certainly have not printed.
STEEVENS.

⁸ — *Mr. Thomas Combe,*] This gentleman was baptized at Stratford, Feb. 9, 1588-9, so that he was twenty-seven years old at the time of Shakspeare's death. He died at Stratford in July 1657, aged 66; and his elder brother William died at the same place, Jan. 30, 1606-7, aged 80. Mr. Thomas Combe by his will made June 20, 1656, directed his executors to convert all his personal property into money, and to lay it out in the purchase of lands, to be settled on William Combe, the eldest son of John Combe of Allchurch in the county of Worcester, Gent. and his heirs male; remainder to his two brothers successively. Where, therefore, our poet's sword has wandered, I have not been able to discover. I have taken the trouble to ascertain the ages of Shakspeare's friends and relations, and the time of their deaths, because we are thus enabled to judge how far the traditions concerning him which were communicated to Mr. Rowe in the beginning of this century, are worthy of credit. MALONE.

⁹ — *to Francis Collins* —] This gentleman, who was the son of Mr. Walter Collins, was baptized at Stratford, Dec. 24, 1582. I know not when he died. MALONE.

Item, I give and bequeath to Hamlet [*Hamnet*] Sadler¹ twenty-six shillings eight-pence, to buy him a ring; to William Reynolds, gent. twenty-six shillings eight-pence, to buy him a ring; to my godson William Walker,² twenty shillings in gold; to Anthony Nash,³ gent. twenty-six shillings eight-pence; and to Mr. John Nash,⁴ twenty-six shillings eight-pence; and to my fellows, John Hemynge, Richard Burbage, and Henry Cundell,⁵ twenty-six shillings eight-pence apiece, to buy them rings.

Item, I give, will, bequeath, and devise, unto my daughter Susanna Hall, for better enabling of her to perform this my will, and towards the performance thereof, all that capital message or tene-

¹ ——— to *Hamnet Sadler* —] This gentleman was godfather to Shakspeare's only son, who was called after him. Mr. Sadler, I believe, was born about the year 1550, and died at Stratford-upon-Avon, in October 1624. His wife, Judith Sadler, who was godmother to Shakspeare's youngest daughter, was buried there, March 23, 1613-14. Our poet probably was godfather to their son *William*, who was baptized at Stratford, Feb. 5, 1597-8. MALONE.

² ——— to my godson, *William Walker*,] William, the son of Henry Walker, was baptized at Stratford, Oct. 16, 1608. I mention this circumstance, because it ascertains that our author was at his native town in the autumn of that year. Mr. William Walker was buried at Stratford, March 1, 1679-80.

MALONE.

³ ——— to *Anthony Nash*,] He was father of Mr. Thomas Nash, who married our poet's grand-daughter, Elizabeth Hall. He lived, I believe, at Welcombe, where his estate lay; and was buried at Stratford, Nov. 18, 1622. MALONE.

⁴ ——— to *Mr. John Nash*,] This gentleman died at Stratford, and was buried there, Nov. 10, 1623. MALONE.

⁵ ——— to my fellows, *John Hemynge, Richard Burbage, and Henry Cundell*,] These our poet's fellows did not very long survive him. Burbage died in March, 1619; Cundell in December, 1627; and Hemynge in October 1630. See their wills in *The Account of our old Actors*, in Vol. III. MALONE.

ment, with the appurtenances, in Stratford aforesaid, called The New Place, wherein I now dwell, and two messuages or tenements, with the appurtenances, situate, lying, and being in Henley-street, within the borough of Stratford aforesaid; and all my barns, stables, orchards, gardens, lands, tenements, and hereditaments whatsoever, situate, lying, and being, or to be had, received, perceived,⁶ or taken, within the towns, hamlets, villages, fields, and grounds of Stratford-upon-Avon, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe,⁷ or in any of them, in the said county of Warwick; and also all that messuage or tenement, with the appurtenances, wherein one John Robinson dwelleth, situate, lying, and being, in the Blackfriars in London near the Wardrobe;⁸ and all other my

⁶ — *received, perceived,*] Instead of these words, we have hitherto had in all the printed copies of this will, *reserved, preserved.* MALONE.

⁷ — *Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe,*] The lands of Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe, here devised, were in Shakspeare's time a continuation of one large field, all in the parish of Stratford. Bishopton is two miles from Stratford, and Welcombe one. For *Bishopton*, Mr. Theobald erroneously printed *Bushaxton*, and the error has been continued in all the subsequent editions. The word in Shakspeare's original will is spelt *Bushopton*, the vulgar pronunciation of Bishopton.

I searched the Indexes in the Rolls chapel from the year 1589 to 1616, with the hope of finding an enrolment of the purchase-deed of the estate here devised by our poet, and of ascertaining its extent and value; but it was not enrolled during that period, nor could I find any inquisition taken after his death, by which its value might have been ascertained. I suppose it was conveyed by the former owner to Shakspeare, not by bargain and sale, but by a deed of feoffment, which it was not necessary to enroll.

MALONE.

⁸ — *that messuage or tenement—in the Blackfriars in Lon-*

lands, tenements, and hereditaments whatsoever ; to have and to hold all and singular the said premises, with their appurtenances, unto the said Susanna Hall, for and during the term of her natural life ; and after her decease to the first son of her body lawfully issuing, and to the heirs males of the body of the said first son lawfully issuing ; and for default of such issue, to the second son of her body lawfully issuing, and to the heirs males of the body of the said second son lawfully issuing ; and for default of such heirs, to the third son of the body of the said Susanna lawfully issuing, and to the heirs males of the body of the said third son lawfully issuing ; and for default of such issue, the same so to be and remain to the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh sons of her body, lawfully issuing one after another, and to the heirs males of the bodies of the said fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh sons lawfully issuing, in such manner as it is before limited to be and remain to the first, second, and third sons of her body, and to their heirs males ; and for default of such issue, the said premises to be and remain to my said niece Hall, and the heirs males of her body lawfully issuing ; and for default of such issue, to my daughter Judith, and the heirs males of her body lawfully issuing ; and for default of such issue, to the right heirs of me the said William Shakspeare for ever.

don near the Wardrobe ;] This was the house which was mortgaged to Henry Walker. See p. 149.

By the *Wardrobe* is meant the King's Great Wardrobe, a royal house near Puddle-Wharf, purchased by King Edward the Third from Sir John Beauchamp, who built it. King Richard III. was lodged in this house in the second year of his reign. See Stowe's *Survey*, p. 693, edit. 1618. After the fire of London this office was kept in the Savoy ; but it is now abolished.

MALONE.

William
Shakespeare

William Shakespeare

By me William Shakespeare

wished to be publishing
edit. Fra: Collyer
John Stame
John Robinson
Hannet Sadler
Robert Wastrell

Item, I give unto my wife my second best bed, with the furniture.⁹

Item, I give and bequeath to my said daughter Judith my broad silver gilt bowl. All the rest of my goods, chattels, leases, plate, jewels, and household stuff whatsoever, after my debts and legacies paid, and my funeral expences discharged, I give, devise, and bequeath to my son-in-law, John Hall, gent. and my daughter Susanna his wife, whom I ordain and make executors of this my last will and testament. And I do entreat and appoint the said Thomas Russel, esq. and Francis Collins, gent. to be overseers hereof. And do revoke all former wills, and publish this to be my last will and testament. In witness whereof I have hereunto put my hand, the day and year first above written.

By me¹ **William Shakspeare.**

Witness to the publishing hereof,

Fra. Collyns,²
 Julius Shaw,³
 John Robinson,⁴
 Hamnet Sadler,⁵
 Robert Whattcott.

⁹ — *my second best bed, with the furniture.*] Thus Shakspeare's original will. Mr. Theobald and the other modern editors have been more bountiful to Mrs. Shakspeare, having printed instead of these words, "—my *brown* best bed, with the furniture." MALONE.

It appears, in the original will of Shakspeare, (now in the Prerogative-Office, Doctor's Commons,) that he had forgot his wife; the legacy to her being expressed by an interlineation, as well as those to Heminge, Burbage, and Condell.

The will is written on three sheets of paper, the two last of which are undoubtedly subscribed with Shakspeare's own hand. The first indeed has his name in the margin, but it differs somewhat in spelling as well as manner, from the two signatures that

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud London, coram Magistro William Byrde, Legum Doctore, &c. vicesimo secundo die mensis Junii, Anno Domini 1616; juramento Johannis Hall unius ex. cui, &c. de bene, &c. jurat. reservata potestate, &c. Susannæ Hall, alt ex. &c. eam cum venerit, &c. petitur. &c.

follow. The reader will find a fac-simile of all the three, as well as those of the witnesses, opposite this page. STEEVENS.

The name at the top of the margin of the first sheet was probably written by the scrivener who drew the will. This was the constant practice in Shakspeare's time. MALONE.

¹ By me *William Shakspeare.*] This was the mode of our poet's time. Thus the Register of Stratford is signed at the bottom of each page, in the year 1616: "*Per me Richard Watts, Minister.*" These concluding words have hitherto been inaccurately exhibited thus: "*— the day and year first above-written by me, William Shakspeare.*" Neither the day, nor year, nor any preceding part of this will, was written by our poet. "*By me,*" &c. only means—*The above is the will of me William Shakspeare.* MALONE.

² — *Fra. Collyns,*] See p. 157. MALONE.

³ — *Julius Shaw,*] was born in Sept. 1571. He married Anne Boyes, May 5, 1594; and died at Stratford in June 1629. MALONE.

⁴ — *John Robinson,*] John, son of Thomas Robinson, was baptized at Stratford, Nov. 30, 1589. I know not when he died. MALONE.

⁵ — *Hamnet Sadler,*] See p. 158. MALONE.

THE
DEDICATION OF THE PLAYERS.

TO THE
MOST NOBLE AND INCOMPARABLE PAIRE OF
BRETHREN,
W I L L I A M,
Earle of PEMBROKE, &c. Lord Chamberlaine to the
Kings most Excellent Majestie;

AND
P H I L I P,
Earle of MONTGOMERY, &c. Gentleman of his
Majesties Bed-chamber.

Both Knights of the Most Noble Order of the
Garter, and our singular good LORDS.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

WHILST we studie to be thankfull in our parti-
cular, for the many favors we have received from
your L. L. we are false upon the ill fortune, to
mingle two the most diverse things that can be,
feare, and rashnesse; rashnesse in the enterprize,
and feare of the successe. For, when we value the
places your H. H. sustaine, we cannot but know the
dignity greater, than to descend to the reading of
these trifles: and, while we name them trifles, we
have deprived ourselves of the defence of our de-

dication. But since your L. L. have been pleased to thinke these trifles something, heretofore; and have prosecuted both them, and their authour living, with so much favour; we hope that (they out-living him, and he not having the fate, common with some, to be exequutor to his owne writings) you will use the same indulgence toward them, you have done unto their parent. There is a great difference, whether any booke choose his patrones, or find them: this hath done both. For so much were your L. L. likings of the several parts, when they were acted, as before they were published, the volume asked to be yours. We have but collected them, and done an office to the dead, to procure his orphanes, guardians; without ambition either of selfe-profit, or fame: onely to keepe the memory of so worthy a friend, and fellow alive, as was our SHAKSPEARE, by humble offer of his playes, to your most noble patronage. Wherein, as we have justly observed no man to come neere your L. L. but with a kind of religious addresse, it hath bin the height of our care, who are the presenters, to make the present worthy of your H. H. by the perfection. But, there we must also crave our abilities to be considered, my lords. We cannot goe beyond our owne powers. Country hands reach forth milke, creame, fruits, or what they have: and many nations (we have heard) that had not gummes and incense, obtained their requests with a leavened cake.⁶ It was no fault to approach their

⁶ *Country hands reach forth milk, &c. and many nations—that had not gummes and incense, obtained their requests with a leavened cake.*] This seems to have been one of the common-places of dedication in Shakspeare's age. We find it in Morley's *Dedication of a Book of Songs to Sir Robert Cecil, 1595*: "I have presumed (says he) to make offer of these simple composi-

gods by what meanes they could: and the most, though meanest, of things are made more precious, when they are dedicated to temples. In that name therefore, we most humbly consecrate to your H. H. these remaines of your servant SHAKSPEARE; that what delight is in them may be ever your L. L. the reputation his, and the faults ours, if any be committed, by a paire so carefull to shew their gratitude both to the living, and the dead, as is

Your Lordshippes most bounden,

JOHN HEMINGE,
HENRY CONDELL.

tions of mine, imitating (right honourable) in this the customs of the old world, who wanting *incense* to offer up to their gods, made shift insteade thereof to honour them with *milk*." The same thought (if I recollect right) is again employed by the players in their dedication of Fletcher's plays, folio, 1647.

MALONE

THE
PREFACE
OF
THE PLAYERS.

TO THE GREAT VARIETY OF READERS,

FROM the most able, to him that can but spell : there are you numbered, we had rather you were weighed. Especially, when the fate of all bookes depends upon your capacities : and not of your heads alone, but of your purses. Well ! it is now publique, and you will stand for your priviledges, wee know : to read, and censure. Doe so, but buy it first. That doth best commend a booke, the stationer saies. Then, how odde soever your braines be, or your wisdomes, make your licence the same, and spare not. Judge your sixe-pen'orth,⁷

⁷ *Judge your sixe-pen'orth, &c.*] So, in the Induction to Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* : " — it shall be lawful for any man to judge his six-pen'worth, his twelve-pen'worth, so to his eighteen pence, two shillings, half a crown, to the value of his place ; provided always his place get not above his wit. And if he pay for half a dozen, he may censure for all them too, so that he will undertake that they shall be silent. He shall put in for censurers here, as they do for lots at the lottery : marry, if he drop but six-pence at the door, and will censure a crowns-worth, it is thought there is no conscience or justice in that."

Perhaps Old Ben was author of the *Players' Preface*, and, in the instance before us, has borrowed from himself. STEEVENS.

your shillings worth, your five shillings worth at a time, or higher, so you rise to the just rates, and welcome. But, whatever you doe, buy. Censure will not drive a trade, or make the jacke goe. And though you be a magistrate of wit, and sit on the stage at Black-friars, or the Cockpit, to arraigne plays dailie, know, these playes have had their triall already, and stood out all appeales; and do now come forth quitted rather by a decree of court, than any purchased letters of commendation.

It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have been wished, that the author himselfe had lived to have set forth, and overseen his owne writings; but since it hath been ordained otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his friends the office of their care and paine, to have collected and published them; and so to have published them, as where⁸ (before) you were abused with divers stolne and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious imposters, that exposed them, even those are now offered to your view cured, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers as he conceived them: who, as he was a happy imitator of nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together; and what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.⁹ But it is not our province, who onely gather his workes, and give them you, to praise him. It is yours that reade him. And there we hope, to your divers capacities, you will finde enough, both to draw, and hold you: for his wit

⁸ — as where —] i. e. whereas. MALONE.

⁹ Probably they had few of his MSS. STEEVENS.

can no more lie hid, then it could be lost. Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe: and if then you doe not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger, not to understand him. And so we leave you to other of his friends, who, if you need, can bee your guides: if you neede them not, you can leade yourselves, and others. And such readers we wish him.

JOHN HEMINGE,
HENRY CONDELL.

MR. POPE'S

P R E F A C E.

IT is not my design to enter into a criticism upon this author; though to do it effectually, and not superficially, would be the best occasion that any just writer could take, to form the judgment and taste of our nation. For of all English poets Shakspeare must be confessed to be the fairest and fullest subject for criticism, and to afford the most numerous, as well as most conspicuous instances, both of beauties and faults of all sorts. But this far exceeds the bounds of a preface, the business of which is only to give an account of the fate of his works, and the disadvantages under which they have been transmitted to us. We shall hereby ex-

tenuate many faults which are his, and clear him from the imputation of many which are not: a design, which, though it can be no guide to future criticks to do him justice in one way, will at least be sufficient to prevent their doing him an injustice in the other.

I cannot however but mention some of his principal and characteristick excellencies, for which (notwithstanding his defects) he is justly and universally elevated above all other dramatick writers. Not that this is the proper place of praising him, but because I would not omit any occasion of doing it.

If ever any author deserved the name of an *original*, it was Shakspeare. Homer himself drew not his art so immediately from the fountains of nature, it proceeded through Ægyptian strainers and channels, and came to him not without some tincture of the learning, or some cast of the models, of those before him. The poetry of Shakspeare was inspiration indeed: he is not so much an imitator, as an instrument, of nature; and it is not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks through him.

His *characters* are so much nature herself, that it is a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her. Those of other poets have a constant resemblance, which shows that they received them from one another, and were but multipliers of the same image: each picture, like a mock-rainbow, is but the reflection of a reflection. But every single character in Shakspeare is as much an individual, as those in life itself: it is as impossible to find any two alike; and such as from their relation or affinity in any respect appear most to be twins, will, upon comparison, be found remarkably

distinct. To this life and variety of character, we must add the wonderful preservation of it; which is such throughout his plays, that had all the speeches been printed without the very names of the persons, I believe one might have applied them with certainty to every speaker.¹

The *power* over our *passions* was never possessed in a more eminent degree, or displayed in so different instances. Yet all along, there is seen no labour, no pains to raise them; no preparation to guide or guess to the effect, or be perceived to lead toward it: but the heart swells, and the tears burst out, just at the proper places: we are surprised the moment we weep; and yet upon reflection find the passion so just, that we should be surprised if we had not wept, and wept at that very moment.

How astonishing is it again, that the passions directly opposite to these, laughter and spleen, are no less at his command! that he is not more a master of the *great* than of the *ridiculous* in human nature; of our noblest tendernesses, than of our vainest foibles; of our strongest emotions, than of our idlest sensations!

Nor does he only excel in the passions: in the coolness of reflection and reasoning he is full as admirable. His *sentiments* are not only in general the most pertinent and judicious upon every subject; but by a talent very peculiar, something between penetration and felicity, he hits upon that particular point on which the bent of each argu-

¹ Addison, in the 273d *Spectator*, has delivered a similar opinion respecting Homer: "There is scarce a speech or action in the *Iliad*, which the reader may not ascribe to the person who speaks or acts, without seeing his name at the head of it."

ment turns, or the force of each motive depends. This is perfectly amazing, from a man of no education or experience in those great and publick scenes of life which are usually the subject of his thoughts: so that he seems to have known the world by intuition, to have looked through human nature at one glance, and to be the only author that gives ground for a very new opinion, that the philosopher, and even the man of the world, may be *born*, as well as the poet.

It must be owned, that with all these great excellencies, he has almost as great defects; and that as he has certainly written better, so he has perhaps written worse, than any other. But I think I can in some measure account for these defects, from several causes and accidents; without which it is hard to imagine that so large and so enlightened a mind could ever have been susceptible of them. That all these contingencies should unite to his disadvantage seems to me almost as singularly unlucky, as that so many various (nay contrary) talents should meet in one man, was happy and extraordinary.

It must be allowed that stage-poetry, of all other, is more particularly levelled to please the *populace*, and its success more immediately depending upon the *common suffrage*. One cannot therefore wonder, if Shakspeare, having at his first appearance no other aim in his writings than to procure a subsistence, directed his endeavours solely to hit the taste and humour that then prevailed. The audience was generally composed of the meaner sort of people; and therefore the images of life were to be drawn from those of their own rank: accordingly we find, that not our author's only, but almost all the old comedies have their scene among *trades-*

men and *mechanicks*: and even their historical plays strictly follow the common *old stories* or *vulgar traditions* of that kind of people. In tragedy, nothing was so sure to *surprize* and cause *admiration*, as the most strange, unexpected, and consequently most unnatural, events and incidents; the most exaggerated thoughts; the most verbose and bombast expression; the most pompous rhymes, and thundering versification. In comedy, nothing was so sure to *please*, as mean buffoonery, vile ribaldry, and unmannerly jests of fools and clowns. Yet even in these our author's wit buoys up, and is borne above his subject: his genius in those low parts is like some prince of a romance in the disguise of a shepherd or peasant; a certain greatness and spirit now and then break out, which manifest his higher extraction and qualities.

It may be added, that not only the common audience had no notion of the rules of writing, but few even of the better sort piqued themselves upon any great degree of knowledge or nicety that way; till Ben Jonson getting possession of the stage, brought critical learning into vogue: and that this was not done without difficulty, may appear from those frequent lessons (and indeed almost declamations) which he was forced to prefix to his first plays, and put into the mouth of his actors, the *grex*, *chorus*, &c. to remove the prejudices, and inform the judgment of his hearers. Till then, our authors had no thoughts of writing on the model of the ancients: their tragedies were only histories in dialogue; and their comedies followed the thread of any novel as they found it, no less implicitly than if it had been true history.

To judge therefore of Shakspeare by Aristotle's rules, is like trying a man by the laws of one coun-

try, who acted under those of another. He writ to the *people*; and writ at first without patronage from the better sort, and therefore without aims of pleasing them: without assistance or advice from the learned, as without the advantage of education or acquaintance among them; without that knowledge of the best models, the ancients, to inspire him with an emulation of them; in a word, without any views of reputation, and of what poets are pleased to call immortality: some or all of which have encouraged the vanity, or animated the ambition, of other writers.

Yet it must be observed, that when his performances had merited the protection of his prince, and when the encouragement of the court had succeeded to that of the town; the works of his riper years are manifestly raised above those of his former. The dates of his plays sufficiently evidence that his productions improved, in proportion to the respect he had for his auditors. And I make no doubt this observation will be found true in every instance, were but editions extant from which we might learn the exact time when every piece was composed, and whether writ for the town, or the court.

Another cause (and no less strong than the former) may be deduced from our poet's being a *player*, and forming himself first upon the judgments of that body of men whereof he was a member. They have ever had a standard to themselves, upon other principles than those of Aristotle. As they live by the majority, they know no rule but that of pleasing the present humour, and complying with the wit in fashion; a consideration which brings all their judgment to a short point. Players are just such judges of what is *right*, as

tailors are of what is *graceful*. And in this view it will be but fair to allow, that most of our author's faults are less to be ascribed to his wrong judgment as a poet, than to his right judgment as a player.

By these men it would be thought a praise to Shakspeare, that he scarce ever *blotted a line*. This they industriously propagated, as appears from what we are told by Ben Jonson in his *Discoveries*, and from the preface of *Heminge and Condell* to the first folio edition. But in reality (however it has prevailed) there never was a more groundless report, or to the contrary of which there are more undeniable evidences. As, the comedy of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which he entirely new writ; *The History of Henry the Sixth*, which was first published under the title of *The Contention of York and Lancaster*; and that of *Henry the Fifth*, extremely improved; that of *Hamlet* enlarged to almost as much again as at first, and many others. I believe the common opinion of his want of learning proceeded from no better ground. This too might be thought a praise by some, and to this his errors have as injudiciously been ascribed by others. For 'tis certain, were it true, it would concern but a small part of them; the most are such as are not properly defects, but superfoetations: and arise not from want of learning or reading, but from want of thinking or judging: or rather (to be more just to our author) from a compliance to those wants in others. As to a wrong choice of the subject, a wrong conduct of the incidents, false thoughts, forced expressions, &c. if these are not to be ascribed to the foresaid accidental reasons, they must be charged upon the poet himself, and there is no help for it. But I

think the two disadvantages which I have mentioned (to be obliged to please the lowest of the people, and to keep the worst of company) if the consideration be extended as far as it reasonably may, will appear sufficient to mislead and depress the greatest genius upon earth. Nay, the more modesty with which such a one is endued, the more he is in danger of submitting and conforming to others, against his own better judgment.

But as to his *want of learning*, it may be necessary to say something more: there is certainly a vast difference between *learning* and *languages*. How far he was ignorant of the latter, I cannot determine; but it is plain he had much reading at least, if they will not call it learning. Nor is it any great matter, if a man has knowledge, whether he has it from one language or from another. Nothing is more evident than that he had a taste of natural philosophy, mechanicks, ancient and modern history, poetical learning, and mythology: we find him very knowing in the customs, rites, and manners of antiquity. In *Coriolanus* and *Julius Cæsar*, not only the spirit, but manners, of the Romans are exactly drawn; and still a nicer distinction is shown between the manners of the Romans in the time of the former, and of the latter. His reading in the ancient historians is no less conspicuous, in many references to particular passages: and the speeches copied from Plutarch in *Coriolanus*² may, I think, as well be made an instance of his learning, as those copied from Cicero in *Catiline* of Ben Jonson's. The manners of

² These, as the reader will find in the notes on that play, Shakspeare drew from Sir Thomas North's translation, 1579.

other nations in general, the Egyptians, Venetians, French, &c. are drawn with equal propriety. Whatever object of nature, or branch of science, he either speaks of or describes, it is always with competent, if not extensive knowledge: his descriptions are still exact; all his metaphors appropriated, and remarkably drawn from the true nature and inherent qualities of each subject. When he treats of ethick or politick, we may constantly observe a wonderful justness of distinction, as well as extent of comprehension. No one is more a master of the political story, or has more frequent allusions to the various parts of it: Mr. Waller (who has been celebrated for this last particular) has not shown more learning this way than Shakspeare. We have translations from *Ovid* published in his name,³ among those poems which pass for his, and for some of which we have undoubted authority (being published by himself, and dedicated to his noble patron the Earl of Southampton): he appears also to have been conversant in *Plautus*, from whom he has taken the plot of one of his plays: he follows the Greek authors, and particularly Dares Phrygius, in another, (although I will not pretend to say in what language he read them). The modern Italian writers of *novels* he was manifestly acquainted with; and we may conclude him to be no less conversant with the ancients of his own country, from the use he has made of Chaucer in *Troilus and Cressida*, and in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, if that play be his, as there goes a tradition it was (and indeed it has little resemblance of Fletcher, and more of our author than some of those which have been received as genuine).

³ They were written by Thomas Heywood. See [Mr. Malone's] Vol. X. p. 321, n. 1. MALONE.

I am inclined to think this opinion proceeded originally from the zeal of the partizans of our author and Ben Jonson; as they endeavoured to exalt the one at the expence of the other. It is ever the nature of parties to be in extremes; and nothing is so probable, as that because Ben Jonson had much the more learning, it was said on the one hand that Shakspeare had none at all; and because Shakspeare had much the most wit and fancy, it was retorted on the other, that Jonson wanted both. Because Shakspeare borrowed nothing, it was said that Ben Jonson borrowed every thing. Because Jonson did not write extempore, he was reproached with being a year about every piece; and because Shakspeare wrote with ease and rapidity, they cried, he never once made a blot. Nay, the spirit of opposition ran so high, that whatever those of the one side objected to the other, was taken at the rebound, and turned into praises; as injudiciously, as their antagonists before had made them objections.

Poets are always afraid of envy; but sure they have as much reason to be afraid of admiration. They are the Scylla and Charybdis of authors; those who escape one, often fall by the other. *Pessimum genus inimicorum laudantes*, says Tacitus; and Virgil desires to wear a charm against those who praise a poet without rule or reason:

“ — si ultra placitum laudârit, baccare frontem
“ Cingite, ne vati noceat —.”

But however this contention might be carried on by the partizans on either side, I cannot help thinking these two great poets were good friends, and lived on amicable terms, and in offices of society

with each other. It is an acknowledged fact, that Ben Jonson was introduced upon the stage, and his first works encouraged, by Shakspeare. And after his death, that author writes, *To the memory of his beloved William Shakspeare*, which shows as if the friendship had continued through life. I cannot for my own part find any thing *invidious* or *sparing* in those verses, but wonder Mr. Dryden was of that opinion. He exalts him not only above all his contemporaries, but above Chaucer and Spenser, whom he will not allow to be great enough to be ranked with him; and challenges the names of Sophocles, Euripides, and Æschylus, nay, all Greece and Rome at once, to equal him: and (which is very particular) expressly vindicates him from the imputation of wanting *art*, not enduring that all his excellencies should be attributed to *nature*. It is remarkable too, that the praise he gives him in his *Discoveries* seems to proceed from a *personal kindness*; he tells us, that he loved the man, as well as honoured his memory; celebrates the honesty, openness, and frankness of his temper; and only distinguishes, as he reasonably ought, between the real merit of the author, and the silly and derogatory applauses of the players. Ben Jonson might indeed be sparing in his commendations (though certainly he is not so in this instance) partly from his own nature, and partly from judgment. For men of judgment think they do any man more service in praising him justly, than lavishly. I say, I would fain believe they were friends, though the violence and ill-breeding of their followers and flatterers were enough to give rise to the contrary report. I hope that it may be with *parties*, both in wit and state, as with those monsters described by the poets; and that their *heads* at least may have

something human, though their *bodies* and *tails* are wild beasts and serpents.

As I believe that what I have mentioned gave rise to the opinion of Shakspeare's want of learning; so what has continued it down to us may have been the many blunders and illiteracies of the first publishers of his works. In these editions their ignorance shines in almost every page; nothing is more common than *Actus tertia. Exit omnes. Enter three Witches solus.*⁴ Their French is as bad as their Latin, both in construction and spelling: their very Welsh is false. Nothing is more likely than that those palpable blunders of Hector's quoting Aristotle, with others of that gross kind, sprung from the same root: it not being at all credible that these could be the errors of any man who had the least tincture of a school, or the least conversation with such as had. Ben Jonson (whom they will not think partial to him) allows him at least to have had *some* Latin; which is utterly inconsistent with mistakes like these. Nay, the constant blunders in proper names of persons and places, are such as must have proceeded from a man, who had not so much as read any history in any language: so could not be Shakspeare's.

I shall now lay before the reader some of those almost innumerable errors, which have risen from one source, the ignorance of the players, both as his actors, and as his editors. When the nature and kinds of these are enumerated and considered, I dare to say that not Shakspeare only, but Aristotle

⁴ *Enter three Witches solus.*] This blunder appears to be of Mr. Pope's own invention. It is not to be found in any one of the four folio copies of *Macbeth*, and there is no quarto edition of it extant. STEEVENS.

or Cicero, had their works undergone the same fate, might have appeared to want sense as well as learning.

It is not certain that any one of his plays was published by himself. During the time of his employment in the theatre, several of his pieces were printed separately in quarto. What makes me think that most of these were not published by him, is the excessive carelessness of the press: every page is so scandalously false spelled, and almost all the learned and unusual words so intolerably mangled, that it is plain there either was no corrector to the press at all, or one totally illiterate. If any were supervised by himself, I should fancy *The Two Parts of Henry the Fourth*, and *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, might have been so: because I find no other printed with any exactness; and (contrary to the rest) there is very little variation in all the subsequent editions of them. There are extant two prefaces to the first quarto edition of *Troilus and Cressida* in 1609, and to that of *Othello*; by which it appears, that the first was published without his knowledge or consent, and even before it was acted, so late as seven or eight years before he died: and that the latter was not printed till after his death. The whole number of genuine plays, which we have been able to find printed in his life-time, amounts but to eleven. And of some of these, we meet with two or more editions by different printers, each of which has whole heaps of trash different from the other: which I should fancy was occasioned by their being taken from different copies belonging to different playhouses.

The folio edition (in which all the plays we now receive as his were first collected) was published by two players, Heminge and Condell, in 1623,

seven years after his decease. They declare, that all the other editions were stolen and surreptitious, and affirm theirs to be purged from the errors of the former. This is true as to the literal errors, and no other; for in all respects else it is far worse than the quartos.

First, because the additions of trifling and bombast passages are in this edition far more numerous. For whatever had been added, since those quartos, by the actors, or had stolen from their mouths into the written parts, were from thence conveyed into the printed text, and all stand charged upon the author. He himself complained of this usage in *Hamlet*, where he wishes that *those who play the clowns would speak no more than is set down for them.* (Act III. sc. ii.) But as a proof that he could not escape it, in the old editions of *Romeo and Juliet* there is no hint of a great number of the mean conceits and ribaldries now to be found there. In others, the low scenes of mobs, plebeians, and clowns, are vastly shorter than at present: and I have seen one in particular (which seems to have belonged to the play-house, by having the parts divided with lines, and the actors names in the margin) where several of those very passages were added in a written hand, which are since to be found in the folio.

In the next place, a number of beautiful passages, which are extant in the first single editions, are omitted in this: as it seems, without any other reason, than their willingness to shorten some scenes: these men (as it was said of Procrustes) either lopping, or stretching an author, to make him just fit for their stage.

This edition is said to be printed from the *original copies*; I believe they meant those which had

lain ever since the author's days in the play-house, and had from time to time been cut, or added to, arbitrarily. It appears that this edition, as well as the quartos, was printed (at least partly) from no better copies than the *prompter's book*, or *piece-meal parts* written out for the use of the actors: for in some places their very⁵ names are through carelessness set down instead of the *Personæ Dramatis*; and in others the notes of direction to the *property-men* for their *moveables*, and to the *players* for their *entries*, are inserted into the text⁶ through the ignorance of the transcribers.

The plays not having been before so much as distinguished by *Acts* and *Scenes*, they are in this edition divided according as they played them; often when there is no pause in the action, or where they thought fit to make a breach in it, for the sake of musick, masques, or monsters.

Sometimes the scenes are transposed and shuffled backward and forward; a thing which could no otherwise happen, but by their being taken from separate and piece-meal written parts.

Many verses are omitted entirely, and others transposed; from whence invincible obscurities have arisen, past the guess of any commentator to clear up, but just where the accidental glimpse of an old edition enlightens us.

⁵ *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act II: "Enter Prince Leonato, Claudio, and Jack Wilson," instead of *Balthasar*. And in Act IV. *Cowley* and *Kemp* constantly through a whole scene.

Edit. fol. of 1623, and 1632. POPE.

⁶ Such as

"My queen is murder'd! Ring the little bell."

"—His nose grew as sharp as a pen, and a table of green fields;" which last words are not in the quarto. POPE.

There is no such line in any play of Shakspeare, as that quoted above by Mr. Pope. MALONE.

Some characters were confounded and mixed, or two put into one, for want of a competent number of actors. Thus in the quarto edition of *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Act V. Shakspeare introduces a kind of master of the revels called *Philostrate*; all whose part is given to another character (that of *Egeus*) in the subsequent editions: so also in *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. This too makes it probable that the prompter's books were what they called the original copies.

From liberties of this kind, many speeches also were put into the mouths of wrong persons, where the author now seems chargeable with making them speak out of character: or sometimes perhaps for no better reason, than that a governing player, to have the mouthing of some favourite speech himself, would snatch it from the unworthy lips of an underling.

Prose from verse they did not know, and they accordingly printed one for the other throughout the volume.

Having been forced to say so much of the players, I think I ought in justice to remark, that the judgment, as well as condition of that class of people was then far inferior to what it is in our days. As then the best play-houses were inns and taverns, (the *Globe*, the *Hope*, the *Red Bull*, the *Fortune*, &c.) so the top of the profession were then mere players, not gentlemen of the stage: they were led into the buttery by the steward;⁷ not placed at the

⁷ Mr. Pope probably recollected the following lines in *The Taming of the Shrew*, spoken by a Lord, who is giving directions to his servant concerning some players:

“Go, sirrah, take them to the buttery,

“And give them friendly welcome, every one.”

But he seems not to have observed that the players here introduced were *strollers*; and there is no reason to suppose that

lord's table, or lady's toilette : and consequently were entirely deprived of those advantages they now enjoy in the familiar conversation of our nobility, and an intimacy (not to say dearness) with people of the first condition.

From what has been said, there can be no question but had Shakspeare published his works himself (especially in his latter time, and after his retreat from the stage) we should not only be certain which are genuine, but should find in those that are, the errors lessened by some thousands. If I may judge from all the distinguishing marks of his style, and his manner of thinking and writing, I make no doubt to declare that those wretched plays, *Pericles*, *Lochrine*, *Sir John Oldcastle*, *Yorkshire Tragedy*, *Lord Cromwell*, *The Puritan*, *London Prodigal*, and a thing called *The Double Falshood*,⁷ cannot be admitted as his. And I should conjecture of some of the others, (particularly *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Comedy of Errors*, and *Titus Andronicus*,) that only some characters, single scenes, or perhaps a few particular passages, were of his hand. It is very probable what occasioned some plays to be supposed Shakspeare's, was only this ; that they were pieces produced by unknown authors, or fitted up for the theatre while it was under his administration ; and no owner claiming them, they were adjudged to him, as they give strays to the lord of the manor : a mistake which (one may also observe) it was not for the interest of the house to remove. Yet the

our author, Heminge, Burbage, Lowin, &c. who were licensed by King James, were treated in this manner. MALONE.

⁷ *The Double Falshood*, or *The Distressed Lovers*, a play, acted at Drury Lane, 8vo. 1727. This piece was produced by Mr. Theobald as a performance of Shakspeare's. See Dr. Farmer's *Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare*, Vol. II. REED.

players themselves, Heminge and Condell, afterwards did Shakspeare the justice to reject those eight plays in their edition; though they were then printed in his name,⁸ in every body's hands, and acted with some applause (as we learned from what Ben Jonson says of *Pericles* in his ode on the *New Inn*). That *Titus Andronicus* is one of this class I am the rather induced to believe, by finding the same author openly express his contempt of it in the *Induction to Bartholomew Fair*, in the year 1614, when Shakspeare was yet living. And there is no better authority for these latter sort, than for the former, which were equally published in his lifetime.

If we give into this opinion, how many low and vicious parts and passages might no longer reflect upon this great genius, but appear unworthily charged upon him? And even in those which are really his, how many faults may have been unjustly laid to his account from arbitrary additions, expunctions, transpositions of scenes and lines, confusion of characters and persons, wrong application of speeches, corruptions of innumerable passages by the ignorance, and wrong corrections of them again by the impertinence of his first editors? From one or other of these considerations, I am verily persuaded, that the greatest and the grossest part of what are thought his errors would vanish, and leave his character in a light very different from that disadvantageous one, in which it now appears to us.

This is the state in which Shakspeare's writings lie at present; for since the above-mentioned folio edition, all the rest have implicitly followed it,

⁸ His name was affixed only to four of them. MALONE.

without having recourse to any of the former, or ever making the comparison between them. It is impossible to repair the injuries already done him; too much time has elapsed, and the materials are too few. In what I have done I have rather given a proof of my willingness and desire, than of my ability, to do him justice. I have discharged the dull duty of an editor, to my best judgment, with more labour than I expect thanks, with a religious abhorrence of all innovation, and without any indulgence to my private sense or conjecture. The method taken in this edition will show itself. The various readings are fairly put in the margin, so that every one may compare them; and those I have preferred into the text are constantly *ex fide codicum*, upon authority. The alterations or additions, which Shakspeare himself made, are taken notice of as they occur. Some suspected passages, which are excessively bad (and which seem interpolations by being so inserted that one can entirely omit them without any chasm, or deficiency in the context) are degraded to the bottom of the page; with an asterisk referring to the places of their insertion. The scenes are marked so distinctly, that every removal of place is specified; which is more necessary in this author than any other, since he shifts them more frequently; and sometimes, without attending to this particular, the reader would have met with obscurities. The more obsolete or unusual words are explained. Some of the most shining passages are distinguished by commas in the margin; and where the beauty lay not in particulars, but in the whole, a star is prefixed to the scene. This seems to me a shorter and less ostentatious method of performing the better half of criticism (namely, the pointing out

an author's excellencies) than to fill a whole paper with citations of fine passages, with *general applauses*, or *empty exclamations* at the tail of them. There is also subjoined a catalogue of those first editions, by which the greater part of the various readings and of the corrected passages are authorized; most of which are such as carry their own evidence along with them. These editions now hold the place of originals, and are the only materials left to repair the deficiencies or restore the corrupted sense of the author: I can only wish that a greater number of them (if a greater were ever published) may yet be found, by a search more successful than mine, for the better accomplishment of this end.

I will conclude by saying of Shakspeare, that with all his faults, and with all the irregularity of his *drama*, one may look upon his works, in comparison of those that are more finished and regular, as upon an ancient majestick piece of *Gothick* architecture, compared with a neat modern building: the latter is more elegant and glaring, but the former is more strong and more solemn. It must be allowed that in one of these there are materials enough to make many of the other. It has much the greater variety, and much the nobler apartments; though we are often conducted to them by dark, odd, and uncouth passages. Nor does the whole fail to strike us with greater reverence, though many of the parts are childish, ill-placed, and unequal to its grandeur.⁹

⁹ The following passage by Mr. Pope stands as a preface to the *various readings* at the end of the 8th volume of his edition of Shakspeare, 1728. For the notice of it I am indebted to Mr. Chalmers's *Supplemental Apology*, p. 261. REED.

“ Since the publication of *our* first edition, there having been

MR. THEOBALD'S

P R E F A C E.¹

THE attempt to write upon SHAKSPEARE is like going into a large, a spacious, and a splendid dome, through the conveyance of a narrow and obscure entry. A glare of light suddenly breaks upon you beyond what the avenue at first promised; and a thousand beauties of genius and character,

some attempts upon Shakspeare published by Lewis Theobald, (which he would not communicate during the time wherein that edition was preparing for the press, when *we*, by publick advertisements, did request the assistance of all lovers of this author,) *we* have inserted, in this impression, as many of 'em as are judg'd of any the least advantage to the poet; the whole amounting to about *twenty-five* words.

“ But to the end every reader may judge for himself, we have annexed a *complete list* of the rest; which if he shall think *trivial*, or *erroneous*, either in part, or in whole; at worst it can spoil but a half sheet of paper, that chances to be left vacant here. And we purpose for the future, to do the same with respect to any other persons, who either thro' *candor* or *vanity*, shall communicate or publish, the least things tending to the illustration of our author. *We* have here omitted nothing but *pointings* and meer errors of the press, which I hope the corrector of it has rectify'd; if not, I cou'd wish as accurate an one as Mr. Th. [if he] had been at that trouble, which I desired Mr. Tonson to solicit him to undertake. A. P.”

¹ This is Mr. Theobald's preface to his second edition in 1740, and was much curtailed by himself after it had been prefixed to the impression in 1733. STEEVENS.

like so many gaudy apartments pouring at once upon the eye, diffuse and throw themselves out to the mind. The prospect is too wide to come within the compass of a single view : it is a gay confusion of pleasing objects, too various to be enjoyed but in a general admiration ; and they must be separated and eyed distinctly, in order to give the proper entertainment.

And as, in great piles of building, some parts are often finished up to hit the taste of the *connoisseur* ; others more negligently put together, to strike the fancy of a common and unlearned beholder ; some parts are made stupendously magnificent and grand, to surprise with the vast design and execution of the architect ; others are contracted, to amuse you with his neatness and elegance in little ; so, in Shakspeare, we may find *traits* that will stand the test of the severest judgment ; and strokes as carelessly hit off, to the level of the more ordinary capacities ; some descriptions raised to that pitch of grandeur, as to astonish you with the compass and elevation of his thought ; and others copying nature within so narrow, so confined a circle, as if the author's talent lay only at drawing in miniature.

In how many points of light must we be obliged to gaze at this great poet ! In how many branches of excellence to consider and admire him ! Whether we view him on the side of art or nature, he ought equally to engage our attention : whether we respect the force and greatness of his genius, the extent of his knowledge and reading, the power and address with which he throws out and applies either nature or learning, there is ample scope both for our wonder and pleasure. If his diction, and the clothing of his thoughts attract us, how much

more must we be charmed with the richness and variety of his images and ideas! If his images and ideas steal into our souls, and strike upon our fancy, how much are they improved in price when we come to reflect with what propriety and justness they are applied to character! If we look into his characters, and how they are furnished and proportioned to the employment he cuts out for them, how are we taken up with the mastery of his portraits! What draughts of nature! What variety of originals, and how differing each from the other! How are they dressed from the stores of his own luxurious imagination; without being the apes of mode, or borrowing from any foreign wardrobe! Each of them are the standards of fashion for themselves: like gentlemen that are above the direction of their tailors, and can adorn themselves without the aid of imitation. If other poets draw more than one fool or coxcomb, there is the same resemblance in them, as in that painter's draughts who was happy only at forming a rose; you find them all younger brothers of the same family, and all of them have a pretence to give the same crest: but Shakspeare's clowns and fops come all of a different house; they are no farther allied to one another than as man to man, members of the same species; but as different in features and lineaments of character, as we are from one another in face or complexion. But I am unawares launching into his character as a writer, before I have said what I intended of him as a private member of the republick.

Mr. Rowe has very justly observed, that people are fond of discovering any little personal story of the great men of antiquity; and that the common accidents of their lives naturally become the sub-

ject of our critical enquiries: that however trifling such a curiosity at the first view may appear, yet, as for what relates to men and letters, the knowledge of an author may, perhaps, sometimes conduce to the better understanding his works; and, indeed, this author's works, from the bad treatment he has met with from copyists and editors, have so long wanted a comment, that one would zealously embrace every method of information that could contribute to recover them from the injuries with which they have so long lain overwhelmed.

'Tis certain, that if we have first admired the man in his writings, his case is so circumstanced, that we must naturally admire the writings in the man: that if we go back to take a view of his education, and the employment in life which fortune had cut out for him, we shall retain the stronger ideas of his extensive genius.

His father, we are told, was a considerable dealer in wool; but having no fewer than ten children, of whom our Shakspeare was the eldest, the best education he could afford him was no better than to qualify him for his own business and employment. I cannot affirm with any certainty how long his father lived; but I take him to be the same Mr. John Shakspeare who was living in the year 1599, and who then, in honour of his son, took out an extract of his family arms from the herald's office; by which it appears, that he had been officer and bailiff of Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire; and that he enjoyed some hereditary lands and tenements, the reward of his great grandfather's faithful and approved service to King Henry VII.

Be this as it will, our Shakspeare, it seems, was

bred for some time at a free-school; the very free-school, I presume, founded at Stratford; where, we are told, he acquired what Latin he was master of: but that his father being obliged, through narrowness of circumstances, to withdraw him too soon from thence, he was thereby unhappily prevented from making any proficiency in the dead languages; a point that will deserve some little discussion in the sequel of this dissertation.

How long he continued in his father's way of business, either as an assistant to him, or on his own proper account, no notices are left to inform us: nor have I been able to learn precisely at what period of life he quitted his native Stratford, and began his acquaintance with London and the *stage*.

In order to settle in the world after a family-manner, he thought fit, Mr. Rowe acquaints us, to marry while he was yet very young. It is certain he did so: for by the monument in Stratford church, erected to the memory of his daughter Susanna, the wife of John Hall, gentleman, it appears, that she died on the 2d of July, in the year 1649, aged 66. So that she was born in 1583, when her father could not be full 19 years old; who was himself born in the year 1564. Nor was she his eldest child, for he had another daughter, Judith, who was born before her,² and who was married to one Mr. Thomas Quiney. So that Shakspeare must have entered into wedlock by that time he was turned of seventeen years.

Whether the force of inclination merely, or some concurring circumstances of convenience in the match, prompted him to marry so early, is not

* See the extracts from the register-book of the parish of Stratford, in a preceding page. STEEVENS.

easy to be determined at this distance ; but, it is probable, a view of interest might partly sway his conduct in this point : for he married the daughter of one Hathaway, a substantial yeoman in his neighbourhood, and she had the start of him in age no less than eight years. She survived him notwithstanding seven seasons, and died that very year the *players* published the first edition of his works in *folio*, anno Dom. 1623, at the age of 67 years, as we likewise learn from her monument in Stratford church.

How long he continued in this kind of settlement, upon his own native spot, is not more easily to be determined. But if the tradition be true, of that extravagance which forced him both to quit his country and way of living, to wit, his being engaged with a knot of young deer-stealers, to rob the park of Sir Thomas Lucy, of Cherlecot, near Stratford, the enterprize savours so much of youth and levity, we may reasonably suppose it was before he could write full man. Besides, considering he has left us six-and-thirty plays at least, avowed to be genuine ; and considering too that he had retired from the stage, to spend the latter part of his days at his own native Stratford ; the interval of time necessarily required for the finishing so many dramattick pieces, obliges us to suppose he threw himself very early upon the play-house. And as he could, probably, contract no acquaintance with the drama, while he was driving on the affair of wool at home ; some time must be lost, even after he had commenced player, before he could attain knowledge enough in the science to qualify himself for turning author.

It has been observed by Mr. Rowe, that amongst other extravagancies, which our author has given

to his Sir John Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, he has made him a deer-stealer; and, that he might at the same time remember his Warwickshire prosecutor, under the name of Justice Shallow, he has given him very near the same coat of arms, which Dugdale, in his *Antiquities* of that county, describes for a family there. There are two coats, I observe, in Dugdale, where three silver fishes are borne in the name of Lucy; and another coat, to the monument of Thomas Lucy, son of Sir William Lucy, in which are quartered, in four several divisions, twelve little fishes, three in each division, probably *Luces*. This very coat, indeed, seems alluded to in Shallow's giving the dozen white *Luces*, and in Slender saying *he may quarter*. When I consider the exceeding candour and good-nature of our author (which inclined all the gentler part of the world to love him, as the power of his wit obliged the men of the most delicate knowledge and polite learning to admire him): and that he should throw this humorous piece of satire at his prosecutor, at least twenty years after the provocation given; I am confidently persuaded it must be owing to an unforgiving rancour on the prosecutor's side: and, if this was the case, it were pity but the disgrace of such an inveteracy should remain as a lasting reproach, and Shallow stand as a mark of ridicule to stigmatize his malice.

It is said, our author spent some years before his death in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends, at his native Stratford. I could never pick up any certain intelligence, when he relinquished the stage. I know, it has been mistakenly thought by some, that Spenser's *Thalia*, in his *Tears of the Muses*, where she laments the loss of

her Willy in the comick scene, has been applied to our author's quitting the stage. But Spenser himself, it is well known, quitted the stage of life in the year 1598; and, five years after this, we find Shakspeare's name among the actors in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*, which first made its appearance in the year 1603. Nor surely, could he then have any thoughts of retiring, since that very year a licence under the privy-seal was granted by King James I. to him and Fletcher, Burbage, Phillippes, Hemings, Condell, &c. authorizing them to exercise the art of playing comedies, tragedies, &c. as well at their usual house called *The Globe* on the other side of the water, as in any other parts of the kingdom, during his majesty's pleasure (a copy of which licence is preserved in Rymer's *Fœdera*). Again, it is certain, that Shakspeare did not exhibit his *Macbeth* till after the Union was brought about, and till after King James I. had begun to touch for the *evil*: for it is plain, he has inserted compliments on both those accounts, upon his royal master in that tragedy. Nor, indeed, could the number of the dramattick pieces, he produced, admit of his retiring near so early as that period. So that what Spenser there says, if it relate at all to Shakspeare, must hint at some occasional recess he made for a time upon a disgust taken: or the Willy, there mentioned, must relate to some other favourite poet. I believe, we may safely determine, that he had not quitted in the year 1610. For, in his *Tempest*, our author makes mention of the Bermuda islands, which were unknown to the English, till, in 1609, Sir John Summers made a voyage to North-America, and discovered them, and afterwards invited some of his countrymen to settle a plantation there. That he

became the private gentleman at least three years before his decease, is pretty obvious from another circumstance: I mean, from that remarkable and well known story, which Mr. Rowe has given us of our author's intimacy with Mr. John Combe, an old gentleman noted thereabouts for his wealth and usury; and upon whom Shakspeare made the following facetious epitaph:

“ Ten in the hundred lies here ingrav'd,
 “ 'Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not sav'd;
 “ If any man ask, who lies in this tomb,
 “ Oh! oh! quoth the devil, 'tis my John-a-Combe.”

This sarcastical piece of wit was, at the gentleman's own request, thrown out extemporally in his company. And this Mr. John Combe I take to be the same, who, by Dugdale in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, is said to have died in the year 1614,³ and for whom, at the upper end of the quire of the Guild of the Holy Cross at Stratford, a fair monument is erected, having a statue thereon cut in alabaster, and in a gown, with this epitaph: “ Here lieth interred the body of John Combe, esq; who died the 10th of July, 1614, who bequeathed several annual charities to the parish of Stratford, and 100l. to be lent to fifteen poor tradesmen from three years to three years, changing the parties every third year, at the rate of fifty shillings *per annum*, the increase to be distributed to the almes-poor there.”—The donation has all the air of a rich and sagacious usurer.

Shakspeare himself did not survive Mr. Combe

³ By Mr. Combe's Will, which is now in the Prerogative-office in London, Shakspeare had a legacy of five pounds bequeathed to him. The Will is without any date. REED.

long, for he died in the year 1616, the 53d of his age. He lies buried on the north side of the chancel in the great church at Stratford; where a monument, decent enough for the time, is erected to him, and placed against the wall. He is represented under an arch in a sitting posture, a cushion spread before him, with a pen in his right hand, and his left rested on a scrawl of paper. The Latin distich, which is placed under the cushion, has been given us by Mr. Pope, or his graver, in this manner:

“INGENIO Pylum, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
“Terra tegit, populus mæret, Olympus habet.”

I confess, I do not conceive the difference between *ingenio* and *genio* in the first verse. They seem to me intirely synonymous terms; nor was the Pylian sage Nestor celebrated for his ingenuity, but for an experience and judgment owing to his long age. Dugdale, in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, has copied this distich with a distinction which Mr. Rowe has followed, and which certainly restores us the true meaning of the epitaph:

“JUDICIO Pylum, genio Socratem,” &c.

In 1614, the greater part of the town of Stratford was consumed by fire; but our Shakspeare's house, among some others, escaped the flames. This house was first built by Sir Hugh Clopton, a younger brother of an ancient family in that neighbourhood, who took their name from the manor of Clopton. Sir Hugh was Sheriff of London in the reign of Richard III. and Lord-Mayor in the reign of King Henry VII. To this gentle-

man the town of Stratford is indebted for the fine stone bridge, consisting of fourteen arches, which, at an extraordinary expence, he built over the Avon, together with a causeway running at the west-end thereof; as also for rebuilding the chapel adjoining to his house, and the cross-aisle in the church there. It is remarkable of him, that though he lived and died a bachelor, among the other extensive charities which he left both to the city of London and town of Stratford, he bequeathed considerable legacies for the marriage of poor maidens of good name and fame both in London and at Stratford. Notwithstanding which large donations in his life, and bequests at his death, as he had purchased the manor of Clopton, and all the estate of the family; so he left the same again to his elder brother's son with a very great addition: (a proof how well beneficence and œconomy may walk hand in hand in wise families): good part of which estate is yet in the possession of Edward Clopton, Esq. and Sir Hugh Clopton, Knt. lineally descended from the elder brother of the first Sir Hugh, who particularly bequeathed to his nephew, by his will, his house, by the name of his *Great House* in Stratford.

The estate had now been sold out of the Clopton family for above a century, at the time when Shakspeare became the purchaser; who, having repaired and modelled it to his own mind, changed the name to *New-Place*, which the mansion-house, since erected upon the same spot, at this day retains. The house and lands, which attended it, continued in Shakspeare's descendants to the time of the *Restoration*; when they were re-purchased by the Clopton family, and the mansion now belongs to Sir Hugh Clopton, Knt. To the favour of this

worthy gentleman I owe the knowledge of one particular, in honour of our poet's once dwelling-house, of which, I presume, Mr. Rowe never was apprized. When the civil war raged in England, and King Charles the First's queen was driven by the necessity of affairs to make a recess in Warwickshire, she kept her court for three weeks in New-Place. We may reasonably suppose it then the best private house in the town; and her majesty preferred it to the college, which was in the possession of the Combe family, who did not so strongly favour the king's party.

How much our author employed himself in poetry, after his retirement from the stage, does not so evidently appear: very few posthumous sketches of his pen have been recovered to ascertain that point. We have been told, indeed, in print,⁴ but not till very lately, that two large chests full of this great man's loose papers and manuscripts, in the hands of an ignorant baker of Warwick, (who married one of the descendants from our Shakspeare,) were carelessly scattered and thrown about as garret lumber and litter, to the particular knowledge of the late Sir William Bishop, till they were all consumed in the general fire and destruction of that town. I cannot help being a little apt to distrust the authority of this tradition, because his wife survived him seven years; and, as his favourite daughter Susanna survived her twenty-six years, it is very improbable they should suffer such a treasure to be removed, and translated into a remoter branch of the family, without a scrutiny first made into the value of it.

⁴ See an answer to Mr. Pope's Preface to Shakspeare, by a Strolling Player, 8vo. 1729, p. 45. REED.

This, I say, inclines me to distrust the authority of the relation: but notwithstanding such an apparent improbability, if we really lost such a treasure, by whatever fatality or caprice of fortune they came into such ignorant and neglected hands, I agree with the *relater*, the misfortune is wholly irreparable.

To these particulars, which regard his person and private life, some few more are to be gleaned from Mr. Rowe's *Account of his Life and Writings*: let us now take a short view of him in his publick capacity as a *writer*: and, from thence, the transition will be easy to the *state* in which his *writings* have been handed down to us.

No age, perhaps, can produce an author more various from himself, than Shakspeare has been universally acknowledged to be. The diversity in style, and other parts of composition, so obvious in him, is as variously to be accounted for. His education, we find, was at best but begun: and he started early into a science from the force of genius, unequally assisted by acquired improvements. His fire, spirit, and exuberance of imagination, gave an impetuosity to his pen: his ideas flowed from him in a stream rapid, but not turbulent; copious, but not ever overbearing its shores. The ease and sweetness of his temper might not a little contribute to his facility in writing; as his employment as a *player*, gave him an advantage and habit of fancying himself the very character he meant to delineate. He used the helps of his function in forming himself to create and express that *sublime*, which other actors can only copy, and throw out, in action and graceful attitude. But, *Nullum sine veniâ placuit ingenium*, says Seneca. The genius, that gives us the greatest pleasure, sometimes stands

in need of our indulgence. Whenever this happens with regard to Shakspeare, I would willingly impute it to a vice of *his times*. We see complaisance enough, in our days, paid to a *bad taste*. So that his *clinches*, *false wit*, and descending beneath himself, may have proceeded from a deference paid to the then *reigning barbarism*.

I have not thought it out of my province, whenever occasion offered, to take notice of some of our poet's grand touches of nature, some, that do not appear sufficiently such, but in which he seems the most deeply instructed; and to which, no doubt, he has so much owed that happy preservation of his *characters*, for which he is justly celebrated. Great geniuses, like his, naturally unambitious, are satisfied to conceal their arts in these points. It is the foible of your worser poets to make a parade and ostentation of that little science they have; and to throw it out in the most ambitious colours. And whenever a writer of this class shall attempt to copy these artful concealments of our author, and shall either think them easy, or practised by a writer for his ease, he will soon be convinced of his mistake by the difficulty of reaching the imitation of them.

“ Speret idem, sudet multùm, frustráque laboret,
 “ Ausus idem:—————”

Indeed to point out and exclaim upon all the beauties of Shakspeare, as they come singly in review, would be as insipid, as endless; as tedious, as unnecessary: but the explanation of those beauties that are less obvious to common readers, and whose illustration depends on the rules of just criticism, and an exact knowledge of human life,

should deservedly have a share in a general critique upon the author. But to pass over at once to another subject:—

It has been allowed on all hands, how far our author was indebted to *nature*; it is not so well agreed, how much he owed to *languages* and acquired *learning*.⁵ The decisions on this subject were certainly set on foot by the hint from Ben Jonson, that he had small Latin, and less Greek: and from this tradition, as it were, Mr. Rowe has thought fit peremptorily to declare, that, “It is without controversy, he had no knowledge of the writings of the ancient poets, for that in his works we find no traces of any thing which looks like an imitation of the ancients. For the delicacy of his taste (continues he) and the natural bent of his own great genius (equal, if not superior, to some of the best of theirs,) would certainly have led him

⁵ *It has been allowed &c.]* On this subject an eminent writer has given his opinion which should not be suppressed. “You will ask me, perhaps, now I am on this subject, how it happened that Shakspeare’s language is every where so much his own as to secure his imitations, if they were such, from discovery; when I pronounce with such assurance of those of our other poets. The answer is given for me in the preface to Mr. Theobald’s Shakspeare; though the observation, I think, is too good to come from that critick. It is, that though his words, agreeably to the state of the English tongue at that time, be generally Latin, his phraseology is perfectly English: an advantage he owed to his slender acquaintance with the Latin idiom. Whereas the other writers of his age and such others of an older date as were likely to fall into his hands, had not only the most familiar acquaintance with the Latin idiom, but affected on all occasions to make use of it. Hence it comes to pass, that though he might draw sometimes from the Latin (Ben Jonson you know tells us *He had less Greek*) and the learned English writers, he takes nothing but the sentiments; the expression comes of itself and is purely English.” *Bishop Hurd’s Letter to Mr. Mason, on the Marks of Imitation*, 8vo. 1758. REED.

to read and study them with so much pleasure, that some of their fine images would naturally have insinuated themselves into, and been mixed with, his own writings: and so his not copying, at least something from them, may be an argument of his never having read them." I shall leave it to the determination of my learned readers, from the numerous passages which I have occasionally quoted in my notes, in which our poet seems closely to have imitated the classicks, whether Mr. Rowe's assertion be so absolutely to be depended on. The result of the controversy must certainly, either way, terminate to our author's honour: how happily he could imitate them, if that point be allowed; or how gloriously he could think like them, without owing any thing to imitation.

Though I should be very unwilling to allow Shakspeare so poor a scholar, as many have laboured to represent him, yet I shall be very cautious of declaring too positively on the other side of the question; that is, with regard to my opinion of his knowledge in the dead languages. And therefore the passages, that I occasionally quote from the classicks, shall not be urged as proofs that he knowingly imitated those originals; but brought to show how happily he has expressed himself upon the same topicks. A very learned critick of our own nation has declared, that a sameness of thought and sameness of expression too, in two writers of a different age, can hardly happen, without a violent suspicion of the latter copying from his predecessor. I shall not therefore run any great risque of a censure, though I should venture to hint, that the resemblances in thought and expression of our author and an ancient (which we should allow to be imitation in the one whose learning was not ques-

tioned) may sometimes take its rise from strength of memory, and those impressions which he owed to the school. And if we may allow a possibility of this, considering that, when he quitted the school, he gave into his father's profession and way of living, and had, it is likely, but a slender library of classical learning; and considering what a number of translations, romances, and legends, started about his time, and a little before (most of which, it is very evident, he read); I think it may easily be reconciled why he rather schemed his *plots* and *characters* from these more latter informations, than went back to those fountains, for which he might entertain a sincere veneration, but to which he could not have so ready a recourse.

In touching on another part of his learning, as it related to the knowledge of *history* and *books*, I shall advance something that, at first sight, will very much wear the appearance of a paradox. For I shall find it no hard matter to prove, that, from the grossest blunders in history, we are not to infer his real ignorance of it; nor from a greater use of Latin words, than ever any other English author used, must we infer his intimate acquaintance with that language.

A reader of taste may easily observe, that though Shakspeare, almost in every scene of his historical plays, commits the grossest offences against chronology, history, and ancient politicks; yet this was not through ignorance, as is generally supposed, but through the too powerful blaze of his imagination, which, when once raised, made all acquired knowledge vanish and disappear before it. But this licence in him, as I have said, must not be imputed to ignorance, since as often we may find him, when occasion serves, reasoning up to the

truth of history; and throwing out sentiments as justly adapted to the circumstances, of his subject, as to the dignity of his characters, or dictates of nature in general.

Then to come to his knowledge of the Latin tongue, it is certain, there is a surprizing effusion of Latin words made English, far more than in any one English author I have seen; but we must be cautious to imagine, this was of his own doing. For the English tongue, in this age, began extremely to suffer by an inundation of Latin: and this, to be sure, was occasioned by the pedantry of those two monarchs, Elizabeth and James, both great Latinists. For it is not to be wondered at, if both the court and schools, equal flatterers of power, should adapt themselves to the royal taste.

But now I am touching on the question (which has been so frequently agitated, yet so entirely undecided,) of his learning and acquaintance with the languages; an additional word or two naturally falls in here upon the genius of our author, as compared with that of Jonson his contemporary. They are confessedly the greatest writers our nation could ever boast of in the *drama*. The first, we say, owed all to his prodigious natural genius; and the other a great deal to his art and learning. This, if attended to, will explain a very remarkable appearance in their writings. Besides those wonderful master-pieces of art and genius, which each has given us; they are the authors of other works very unworthy of them: but with this difference, that in Jonson's bad pieces we do not discover one single trace of the author of *The Fox* and *Alchemist*; but, in the wild extravagant notes of Shakspeare, you every now and then encounter strains that recognize the divine composer. This

difference may be thus accounted for. Jonson, as we said before, owing all his excellence to his art, by which he sometimes strained himself to an uncommon pitch, when at other times he unbent and played with his subject, having nothing then to support him, it is no wonder that he wrote so far beneath himself. But Shakspeare, indebted more largely to nature than the other to acquired talents, in his most negligent hours could never so totally divest himself of his genius, but that it would frequently break out with astonishing force and splendor.

As I have never proposed to dilate farther on the character of my author, than was necessary to explain the nature and use of this edition, I shall proceed to consider him as a genius in possession of an everlasting name. And how great that merit must be, which could gain it against all the disadvantages of the horrid condition in which he had hitherto appeared! Had Homer, or any other admired author, first started into publick so maimed and deformed, we cannot determine whether they had not sunk for ever under the ignominy of such an ill appearance. The mangled condition of Shakspeare has been acknowledged by Mr. Rowe, who published him indeed, but neither corrected his text, nor collated the old copies. This gentleman had abilities, and sufficient knowledge of his author, had but his industry been equal to his talents. The same mangled condition has been acknowledged too by Mr. Pope, who published him likewise, pretended to have collated the old copies, and yet seldom has corrected the text but to its injury. I congratulate with the *manes* of our poet, that this gentleman has been sparing in *indulging his private sense*, as he

phrases it; for he, who tampers with an author, whom he does not understand, must do it at the expence of his subject. I have made it evident throughout my remarks, that he has frequently inflicted a wound where he intended a cure. He has acted with regard to our author, as an editor, whom LIPSIVS mentions, did with regard to MARTIAL; *Inventus est nescio quis Popa, qui non vitia ejus, sed ipsum excidit.* He has attacked him like an unhandy slaughterman; and not lopped off the errors, but the poet.

When this is found to be fact, how absurd must appear the praises of such an editor! It seems a moot point, whether Mr. Pope has done most injury to Shakspeare, as his editor and encomiast; or Mr. Rymer done him service, as his rival and censor. They have both shown themselves in an equal *impuissance* of suspecting or amending the corrupted passages: and though it be neither prudence to censure or commend what one does not understand; yet if a man must do one when he plays the critick, the latter is the more ridiculous office; and by that Shakspeare suffers most. For the natural veneration which we have for him makes us apt to swallow whatever is given us as *his*, and set off with encomiums; and hence we quit all suspicions of depravity: on the contrary, the censure of so divine an author sets us upon his defence; and this produces an exact scrutiny and examination, which ends in finding out and discriminating the true from the spurious.

It is not with any secret pleasure that I so frequently animadvert on Mr. Pope as a critick, but there are provocations, which a man can never quite forget. His libels have been thrown out with so much inveteracy, that, not to dispute whether they

should come from a *christian*, they leave it a question whether they *could* come from a *man*. I should be loth to doubt, as Quintus Serenus did in a like case :

“ Sive homo, seu similis turpissima bestia nobis
“ Vulnera dente dedit.———”

The indignation, perhaps, for being represented a *blockhead*, may be as strong in us, as it is in the ladies for a reflection on their *beauties*. It is certain, I am indebted to him for some *flagrant civilities* ; and I shall willingly devote a part of my life to the honest endeavour of quitting scores: with this exception, however, that I will not return those civilities in his *peculiar* strain, but confine myself, at least, to the limits of *common decency*. I shall ever think it better to want *wit*, than to want *humanity*: and impartial posterity may, perhaps, be of my opinion.

But to return to my subject, which now calls upon me to enquire into those causes, to which the depravations of my author originally may be assigned. We are to consider him as a writer, of whom no authentick manuscript was left extant ; as a writer, whose pieces were dispersedly performed on the several *stages* then in being. And it was the custom of those days for the poets to take a price of the *players* for the pieces they from time to time furnished; and thereupon it was supposed they had no farther right to print them without the consent of the *players*. As it was the interest of the *companies* to keep their plays unpublished, when any one succeeded, there was a contest betwixt the curiosity of the town, who demanded to see it in print, and the policy of the *stagers*, who

wished to secrete it within their own walls. Hence many pieces were taken down in short-hand, and imperfectly copied by ear from a *representation*; others were printed from piecemeal parts surreptitiously obtained from the theatres, uncorrect, and without the poet's knowledge. To some of these causes we owe the train of blemishes, that deform those pieces which stole singly into the world in our author's life-time.

There are still other reasons, which may be supposed to have affected the whole set. When the *players* took upon them to publish his works entire, every theatre was ransacked to supply the copy; and *parts* collected, which had gone through as many changes as performers, either from mutilations or additions made to them. Hence we derive many chasms and incoherences in the sense and matter. Scenes were frequently transposed, and shuffled out of their true place, to humour the caprice, or supposed convenience, of some particular actor. Hence much confusion and impropriety has attended and embarrassed the business and fable. To these obvious causes of corruption it must be added, that our author has lain under the disadvantage of having his errors propagated and multiplied by time: because, for near a century, his works were published from the faulty copies, without the assistance of any intelligent editor: which has been the case likewise of many a *classick* writer.

The nature of any distemper once found has generally been the immediate step to a cure. Shakspeare's case has in a great measure resembled that of a corrupt *classick*; and, consequently, the method of cure was likewise to bear a resemblance. By what means, and with what success, this cure

has been effected on ancient writers, is too well known, and needs no formal illustration. The reputation, consequent on tasks of that nature, invited me to attempt the method here; with this view, the hopes of restoring to the publick their greatest poet in his original purity, after having so long lain in a condition that was a disgrace to common sense. To this end I have ventured on a labour, that is the first assay of the kind on any modern author whatsoever. For the late edition of Milton, by the learned Dr. Bentley, is, in the main, a performance of another species. It is plain, it was the intention of that great man rather to correct and pare off the excrescencies of the *Paradise Lost*, in the manner that Tucca and Varius were employed to criticise the *Æneis* of Virgil, than to restore corrupted passages. Hence, therefore, may be seen either their iquity or ignorance of his censurers, who, from some expressions would make us believe the *doctor* every where gives us his corrections as the original text of the author; whereas the chief turn of his criticism is plainly to show the world, that, if Milton did not write as he would have him, he ought to have wrote so.

I thought proper to premise this observation to the readers, as it will show that the critick on Shakspeare is of a quite different kind. His genuine text is for the most part religiously adhered to, and the numerous faults and blemishes, purely his own, are left as they were found. Nothing is altered but what by the clearest reasoning can be proved a corruption of the true text; and the alteration, a real restoration of the genuine reading. Nay, so strictly have I strove to give the true reading, though sometimes not to the advantage of my author, that I have been ridiculously ridi-

culed for it by those, who either were iniquitously for turning every thing to my disadvantage; or else were totally ignorant of the true duty of an editor.

The science of criticism, as far as it affects an editor, seems to be reduced to these three classes; the emendation of corrupt passages; the explanation of obscure and difficult ones; and an enquiry into the beauties and defects of composition. This work is principally confined to the two former parts: though there are some specimens interspersed of the latter kind, as several of the emendations were best supported, and several of the difficulties best explained, by taking notice of the beauties and defects of the composition peculiar to this immortal poet. But this was but occasional, and for the sake only of perfecting the two other parts, which were the proper objects of the editor's labour. The third lies open for every willing undertaker: and I shall be pleased to see it the employment of a masterly pen.

It must necessarily happen, as I have formerly observed, that where the assistance of manuscripts is wanting to set an author's meaning right, and rescue him from those errors which have been transmitted down through a series of incorrect editions, and a long intervention of time, many passages must be desperate, and past a cure; and their true sense irretrievable either to care or the sagacity of conjecture. But is there any reason therefore to say, that because all cannot be retrieved, all ought to be left desperate? We should show very little honesty, or wisdom, to play the tyrants with an author's text; to raze, alter, innovate, and overturn, at all adventures, and to the utter detriment of his sense and meaning: but to

be so very reserved and cautious, as to interpose no relief or conjecture, where it manifestly labours and cries out for assistance, seems, on the other hand, an indolent absurdity.

As there are very few pages in Shakspeare, upon which some suspicions of depravity do not reasonably arise; I have thought it my duty in the first place, by a diligent and laborious collation, to take in the assistances of all the older copies.

In his *historical plays*, whenever our English chronicles, and in his tragedies, when Greek or Roman story could give any light, no pains have been omitted to set passages right, by comparing my author with his originals; for, as I have frequently observed, he was a close and accurate copier wherever his *fable* was founded on *history*.

Wherever the author's sense is clear and discoverable, (though, perchance, low and trivial,) I have not by any innovation tampered with his text, out of an ostentation of endeavouring to make him speak better than the old copies have done.

Where, through all the former editions, a passage has laboured under flat nonsense and invincible darkness, if, by the addition or alteration of a letter or two, or a transposition in the pointing, I have restored to him both sense and sentiment; such corrections, I am persuaded, will need no indulgence.

And whenever I have taken a greater latitude and liberty in amending, I have constantly endeavoured to support my corrections and conjectures by parallel passages and authorities from himself, the surest means of expounding any author whatsoever. *Cette voie d'interpreter un auteur par lui-même est plus sure que tous les commentaires*, says a very learned French critick.

As to my *notes*, (from which the common and learned readers of our author, I hope, will derive some satisfaction,) I have endeavoured to give them a variety in some proportion to their number. Wherever I have ventured at an emendation, a *note* is constantly subjoined to justify and assert the reason of it. Where I only offer a conjecture, and do not disturb the text, I fairly set forth my grounds for such conjecture, and submit it to judgment. Some remarks are spent in explaining passages, where the wit or satire depends on an obscure point of history: others, where allusions are to divinity, philosophy, or other branches of science. Some are added, to show where there is a suspicion of our author having borrowed from the ancients: others, to show where he is rallying his contemporaries; or where he himself is rallied by them. And some are necessarily thrown in, to explain an obscure and obsolete *term*, *phrase*, or *idea*. I once intended to have added a complete and copious *glossary*; but as I have been importuned, and am prepared to give a correct edition of our author's POEMS, (in which many terms occur which are not to be met with in his *Plays*;) I thought a *glossary* to all Shakspeare's works more proper to attend that volume

In reforming an infinite number of passages in the *pointing*, where the sense was before quite lost, I have frequently subjoined notes to show the *depraved*, and to prove the *reformed*, pointing: a part of labour in this work which I could very willingly have spared myself. May it not be objected, why then have you burdened us with these notes? The answer is obvious, and, if I mistake not, very material. Without such notes, these passages in subsequent editions would be liable,

through the ignorance of printers and correctors, to fall into the old confusion: whereas, a note on every one hinders all possible return to depravity: and for ever secures them in a state of purity and integrity not to be lost or forfeited.

Again, as some notes have been necessary to point out the detection of the corrupted text, and establish the restoration of the genuine reading; some others have been as necessary for the explanation of passages obscure and difficult. To understand the necessity and use of this part of my task, some particulars of my author's character are previously to be explained. There are *obscurities* in him, which are common to him with all poets of the same species; there are others, the issue of the times he lived in; and there are others, again, peculiar to himself. The nature of comick poetry being entirely satirical, it busies itself more in exposing what we call caprice and humour, than vices cognizable to the laws. The English, from the happiness of a free constitution, and a turn of mind peculiarly speculative and inquisitive, are observed to produce more *humourists*, and a greater variety of original *characters*, than any other people whatsoever: and these owing their immediate birth to the peculiar genius of each age, an infinite number of things alluded to, glanced at, and exposed, must needs become obscure, as the *characters* themselves are antiquated and disused. An editor therefore should be well versed in the history and manners of his author's age, if he aims at doing him a service in this respect.

Besides, *wit* lying mostly in the assemblage of *ideas*, and in putting those together with quickness and variety, wherein can be found any resemblance, or congruity, to make up pleasant pictures, and

agreeable visions in the fancy; the writer, who aims at wit, must of course range far and wide for materials. Now the age in which Shakspeare lived, having, above all others, a wonderful affection to appear learned, they declined vulgar images, such as are immediately fetched from nature, and ranged through the circle of the sciences, to fetch their ideas from thence. But as the resemblances of such ideas to the subject must necessarily lie very much out of the common way, and every piece of wit appear a riddle to the vulgar; this, that should have taught them the forced, quaint, unnatural tract they were in, (and induce them to follow a more natural one,) was the very thing that kept them attached to it. The ostentatious affectation of abstruse learning, peculiar to that time, the love that men naturally have to every thing that looks like mystery, fixed them down to the habit of obscurity. Thus became the poetry of DONNE (though the wittiest man of that age,) nothing but a continued heap of riddles. And our Shakspeare, with all his easy nature about him, for want of the knowledge of the true rules of art, falls frequently into this vicious manner.

The third species of *obscurities* which deform our author, as the effects of his own genius and character, are those that proceed from his peculiar manner of *thinking*, and as peculiar a manner of *clothing* those *thoughts*. With regard to his *thinking*, it is certain, that he had a general knowledge of all the sciences: but his acquaintance was rather that of a traveller than a native. Nothing in philosophy was unknown to him; but every thing in it had the grace and force of novelty. And as novelty is one main source of admiration, we are not to wonder that he has perpetual allusions to the

most recondite parts of the sciences: and this was done not so much out of affectation, as the effect of admiration begot by novelty. Then, as to his *style* and *diction*, we may much more justly apply to SHAKSPEARE, what a celebrated writer said of MILTON: *Our language sunk under him, and was unequal to that greatness of soul which furnished him with such glorious conceptions.* He therefore frequently uses old words, to give his diction an air of solemnity; as he coins others, to express the novelty and variety of his ideas.

Upon every distinct species of these *obscurities*, I have thought it my province to employ a note for the service of my author, and the entertainment of my readers. A few transient remarks too I have not scrupled to intermix, upon the poet's *negligences* and *omissions* in point of art; but I have done it always in such a manner, as will testify my deference and veneration for the immortal author. Some censurers of Shakspeare, and particularly Mr. Rymer, have taught me to distinguish betwixt the *railer* and *critick*. The outrage of his quotations is so remarkably violent, so pushed beyond all bounds of decency and sober reasoning, that it quite carries over the mark at which it was levelled. Extravagant abuse throws off the edge of the intended disparagement, and turns the madman's weapon into his own bosom. In short, as to Rymer, this is my opinion of him from his *criticisms* on the *tragedies* of the last age. He writes with great vivacity, and appears to have been a scholar: but as for his knowledge of the art of poetry, I cannot perceive it was any deeper than his acquaintance with Bossu and Dacier, from whom he has transcribed many of his best reflections. The late Mr. Gildon was one attached to Rymer by a

similar way of thinking and studies. They were both of that species of criticks who are desirous of displaying their powers rather in finding faults, than in consulting the improvement of the world; the *hypercritical* part of the science of *criticism*.

I had not mentioned the modest liberty I have here and there taken of animadverting on my author, but that I was willing to obviate in time the splenetick exaggerations of my adversaries on this head. From past experiments I have reason to be conscious, in what light this attempt may be placed: and that what I call a *modest liberty* will, by a little of their dexterity, be inverted into downright *impudence*. From a hundred mean and dishonest artifices employed to discredit this edition, and to cry down its editor, I have all the grounds in nature to beware of attacks. But though the malice of wit, joined to the smoothness of versification, may furnish some ridicule; fact, I hope, will be able to stand its ground against baulter and gaiety.

It has been my fate, it seems, as I thought it my duty, to discover some *anachronisms* in our author; which might have slept in obscurity but for *this Restorer*, as Mr. Pope is pleased affectionately to style me: as for instance, where Aristotle is mentioned by Hector in *Troilus and Cressida*; and Galen, Cato, and Alexander the Great, in *Coriolanus*. These, in Mr. Pope's opinion, are blunders, which the illiteracy of the first publishers of his works has fathered upon the poet's memory: *it not being at all credible, that these could be the errors of any man who had the least tincture of a school, or the least conversation with such as had.* But I have sufficiently proved, in the course of my *notes*, that such *anachronisms* were the effect of poetick licence, rather than of ignorance in our poet. And if I

may be permitted to ask a modest question by the way, why may not I restore an *anachronism* really made by our author, as well as Mr. Pope take the privilege to fix others upon him, which he never had it in his head to make; as I may venture to affirm he had not, in the instance of Sir Francis Drake, to which I have spoke in the proper place?

But who shall dare make any words about this freedom of Mr. Pope's towards Shakspeare, if it can be proved, that, in his fits of criticism, he makes no more ceremony with good Homer himself? To try, then, a criticism of his own advancing: in the 8th Book of *The Odyssey*, where Demodocus sings the episode of the loves of Mars and Venus; and that, upon their being taken in the net by Vulcan,

“ ————— The god of arms
“ Must pay th. penalty for lawless charms;”

Mr. Pope is so kind gravely to inform us, “ That Homer in this, as in many other places, seems to allude to the laws of Athens, where death was the punishment of adultery.” But how is this significant observation made out? Why, who can possibly object any thing to the contrary?—*Does not Pausanias relate that Draco, the lawgiver to the Athenians, granted impunity to any person that took revenge upon an adulterer? And was it not also the institution of Solon, that if any one took an adulterer in the fact, he might use him as he pleased?* These things are very true: and to see what a good memory, and sound judgment in conjunction, can achieve! though Homer's date is not determined down to a single year, yet it is pretty generally agreed that he lived above three hundred years before Draco and Solon: and that, it seems, has made

him *seem* to allude to the very laws, which these two legislators propounded above three hundred years after. If this inference be not something like an *anachronism* or *prolepsis*, I will look once more into my lexicons for the true meaning of the words. It appears to me, that somebody besides Mars and Venus has been caught in a net by this episode: and I could call in other instances, to confirm what treacherous tackle this net-work is, if not cautiously handled.

How just, notwithstanding, I have been in detecting the *anachronisms* of my author, and in defending him for the use of them, our late editor seems to think, they should rather have slept in obscurity: and the having discovered them is sneered at, as a sort of wrong-headed sagacity.

The numerous corrections which I have made of the poet's text in my SHAKSPEARE *Restored*, and which the publick have been so kind to think well of, are, in the appendix of Mr. Pope's last edition, slightly called *various readings, guesses, &c.* He confesses to have inserted as many of them as he judged of any the least advantage to the poet; but says, that the whole amounted to about twenty five words: and pretends to have annexed a complete list of the rest, which were not worth his embracing. Whoever has read my book will, at one glance, see how in both these points veracity is strained, so an injury might be done. *Malus, etsi obesse non pote, tamen cogitat.*

Another expedient to make my work appear of a trifling nature, has been an attempt to depreciate *literal criticism*. To this end, and to pay a servile compliment to Mr. Pope, an *anonymous* writer⁶ has,

⁶ David Mallet. See his poem *Of Verbal Criticism*, Vol. I. of his works, 12mo. 1759. REED.

like a Scotch pedlar in wit, unbraced his pack on the subject. But, that his virulence might not seem to be levelled singly at me, he has done me the honour to join Dr. Bentley in the libel. I was in hopes we should have been both abused with smartness of satire at least, though not with solidity of argument; that it might have been worth some reply in defence of the science attacked. But I may fairly say of this author, as Falstaff does of Poin:—*Hang him, baboon! his wit is as thick as Tewksbury mustard; there is no more conceit in him, than is in a MALLET.* If it be not a prophanation to set the opinion of the divine Longinus against such a scribbler, he tells us expressly, “That to make a judgment upon *words* (and *writings*) is the most consummate fruit of much experience.” ἡ γὰρ τῶν λόγων κρίσις πολλῆς ἔστι πείρας τελευταῖον ἐπιγένημα. Whenever words are depraved, the sense of course must be corrupted; and thence the reader is betrayed into a false meaning.

If the Latin and Greek languages have received the greatest advantages imaginable from the labours of the editors and criticks of the two last ages, by whose aid and assistance the grammarians have been enabled to write infinitely better in that art than even the preceding grammarians, who wrote when those tongues flourished as living languages; I should account it a peculiar happiness, that, by the faint essay I have made in this work, a path might be chalked out for abler hands, by which to derive the same advantages to our own tongue; a tongue, which, though it wants none of the fundamental qualities of an universal language, yet, as a *noble writer* says, lisps and stammers as in its cradle; and has produced little more towards its polishing than complaints of its barbarity.

Having now run through all those points, which I intended should make any part of this dissertation, and having in my *former* edition made publick acknowledgments of the assistances lent me, I shall conclude with a brief account of the methods taken in *this*.

It was thought proper, in order to reduce the bulk and price of the impression, that the notes, wherever they would admit of it, might be abridged: for which reason I have curtailed a great quantity of such, in which explanations were too prolix, or authorities in support of an emendation too numerous: and many I have entirely expunged, which were judged rather verbose and declamatory (and so notes merely of ostentation) than necessary or instructive.

The few literal errors which had escaped notice for want of revisals, in the former edition, are here reformed; and the pointing of innumerable passages is regulated, with all the accuracy I am capable of.

I shall decline making any farther declaration of the pains I have taken upon my author, because it was my duty, as his editor, to publish him with my best care and judgment; and because I am sensible, all such declarations are construed to be laying a sort of debt on the publick. As the former edition has been received with much indulgence, I ought to make my acknowledgments to the town for their favourable opinion of it; and I shall always be proud to think that encouragement the best payment I can hope to receive from my poor studies.

SIR THOMAS HANMER'S

P R E F A C E.

WHAT the publick is here to expect is a true and correct edition of Shakspeare's works, cleared from the corruptions with which they have hitherto abounded. One of the great admirers of this incomparable author hath made it the amusement of his leisure hours for many years past to look over his writings with a careful eye, to note the obscurities and absurdities introduced into the text, and according to the best of his judgment to restore the genuine sense and purity of it. In this he proposed nothing to himself, but his private satisfaction in making his own copy as perfect as he could: but, as the emendations multiplied upon his hands, other gentlemen, equally fond of the author, desired to see them, and some were so kind as to give their assistance, by communicating their observations and conjectures upon difficult passages which had occurred to them. Thus by degrees the work growing more considerable than was at first expected, they who had the opportunity of looking into it, too partial perhaps in their judgment, thought it worth being made publick; and he, who hath with difficulty yielded to their persuasions, is far from desiring to reflect upon the late editors for the omissions and defects which they left to be supplied by others who

should follow them in the same province. On the contrary, he thinks the world much obliged to them for the progress they made in weeding out so great a number of blunders and mistakes as they have done; and probably he who hath carried on the work might never have thought of such an undertaking, if he had not found a considerable part so done to his hands.

From what causes it proceeded that the works of this author, in the first publication of them, were more injured and abused than perhaps any that ever passed the press, hath been sufficiently explained in the preface to Mr. Pope's edition, which is here subjoined, and there needs no more to be said upon that subject. This only the reader is desired to bear in mind, that as the corruptions are more numerous, and of a grosser kind than can be well conceived but by those who have looked nearly into them; so in the correcting them this rule hath been most strictly observed, not to give a loose to fancy, or indulge a licentious spirit of criticism, as if it were fit for any one to presume to judge what Shakspeare ought to have written, instead of endeavouring to discover truly and retrieve what he did write: and so great caution hath been used in this respect, that no alterations have been made, but what the sense necessarily required, what the measure of the verse often helped to point out, and what the similitude of words in the false reading and in the true, generally speaking, appeared very well to justify.

Most of those passages are here thrown to the bottom of the page, and rejected as spurious, which were stigmatized as such in Mr. Pope's edition; and it were to be wished that more had then undergone the same sentence. The promoter of the

present edition hath ventured to discard but few more upon his own judgment, the most considerable of which is that wretched piece of ribaldry in *King Henry the Fifth*, put into the mouths of the French princess and an old gentlewoman, improper enough as it is all in French, and not intelligible to an English audience, and yet that perhaps is the best thing that can be said of it. There can be no doubt but a great deal more of that low stuff, which disgraces the works of this great author, was foisted in by the players after his death, to please the vulgar audiences by which they subsisted: and though some of the poor witticisms and conceits must be supposed to have fallen from his pen, yet as he hath put them generally into the mouths of low and ignorant people, so it is to be remembered that he wrote for the stage, rude and unpolished as it then was; and the vicious taste of the age must stand condemned for them, since he hath left upon record a signal proof how much he despised them. In his play of *The Merchant of Venice*, a clown is introduced quibbling in a miserable manner; upon which one, who bears the character of a man of sense, makes the following reflection: *How every fool can play upon a word! I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none but parrots.* He could hardly have found stronger words to express his indignation at those false pretences to wit then in vogue; and therefore though such trash is frequently interspersed in his writings, it would be unjust to cast it as an imputation upon his taste and judgment and character as a writer.

There being many words in Shakspeare which are grown out of use and obsolete, and many borrowed from other languages which are not enough

naturalized or known among us, a glossary is added at the end of the work, for the explanation of all those terms which have hitherto been so many stumbling-blocks to the generality of readers; and where there is any obscurity in the text, not arising from the words, but from a reference to some antiquated customs now forgotten, or other causes of that kind, a note is put at the bottom of the page, to clear up the difficulty.

With these several helps, if that rich vein of sense which runs through the works of this author can be retrieved in every part, and brought to appear in its true light, and if it may be hoped, without presumption, that this is here effected; they who love and admire him will receive a new pleasure, and all probably will be more ready to join in doing him justice, who does great honour to his country as a rare and perhaps a singular genius; one who hath attained a high degree of perfection in those two great branches of poetry, tragedy and comedy, different as they are in their natures from each other; and who may be said without partiality to have equalled, if not excelled, in both kinds, the best writers of any age or country, who have thought it glory enough to distinguish themselves in either.

Since therefore other nations have taken care to dignify the works of their most celebrated poets with the fairest impressions beautified with the ornaments of sculpture, well may our Shakspeare be thought to deserve no less consideration: and as a fresh acknowledgment hath lately been paid to his merit, and a high regard to his name and memory, by erecting his statue at a publick expence; so it is desired that this new edition of his

works, which hath cost some attention and care, may be looked upon as another small monument designed and dedicated to his honour.

DR. WARBURTON'S

P R E F A C E.

IT hath been no unusual thing for writers, when dissatisfied with the patronage or judgment of their own times, to appeal to posterity for a fair hearing. Some have even thought fit to apply to it in the first instance; and to decline acquaintance with the publick, till envy and prejudice had quite subsided. But, of all the trusters to futurity, commend me to the author of the following poems, who not only left it to time to do him justice as it would, but to find him out as it could. For, what between too great attention to his profit as a player, and too little to his reputation as a poet, his works, left to the care of door-keepers and prompters, hardly escaped the common fate of those writings, how good soever, which are abandoned to their own fortune, and unprotected by party or cabal. At length, indeed, they struggled into light; but so disguised and travested, that no classick author, after having run ten secular stages

through the blind cloisters of monks and canons, ever came out in half so maimed and mangled a condition. But for a full account of his disorders, I refer the reader to the excellent discourse which follows,⁷ and turn myself to consider the remedies that have been applied to them.

Shakspeare's works, when they escaped the players, did not fall into much better hands when they came amongst printers and booksellers; who, to say the truth, had at first but small encouragement for putting them into a better condition. The stubborn nonsense, with which he was incrust-ed, occasioned his lying long neglected amongst the common lumber of the stage. And when that resistless splendor, which now shoots all around him, had, by degrees, broke through the shell of those impurities, his dazzled admirers became as suddenly insensible to the extraneous scurf that still stuck upon him, as they had been before to the native beauties that lay under it. So that, as then he was thought not to deserve a cure, he was now supposed not to need any.

His growing eminence, however, required that he should be used with ceremony; and he soon had his appointment of an editor in form. But the bookseller, whose dealing was with wits, having learnt of them, I know not what silly maxim, that *none but a poet should presume to meddle with a poet*, engaged the ingenious Mr. Rowe to undertake this employment. A wit indeed he was; but so utterly unacquainted with the whole business of criticism, that he did not even collate or consult the first editions of the work he undertook to publish; but contented himself with giving us a

⁷ Mr. Pope's Preface. REFD.

meagre account of the author's life, interlarded with some common-place scraps from his writings. The truth is, Shakspeare's condition was yet but ill understood. The nonsense, now, by consent, received for his own, was held in a kind of reverence for its age and author; and thus it continued till another great *poet* broke the charm, by showing us, that the higher we went, the less of it was still to be found.

For the proprietors, not discouraged by their first unsuccessful effort, in due time, made a second; and, though they still stuck to their poets, with infinitely more success in their choice of Mr. Pope, who, by the mere force of an uncommon genius, without any particular study or profession of this art, discharged the great parts of it so well, as to make his edition the best foundation for all further improvements. He separated the genuine from the spurious plays; and, with equal judgment, though not always with the same success, attempted to clear the genuine plays from the interpolated scenes: he then consulted the old editions; and, by a careful collation of them, rectified the faulty, and supplied the imperfect reading, in a great number of places: and lastly, in an admirable preface, hath drawn a general, but very lively sketch of Shakspeare's poetick character; and, in the corrected text, marked out those peculiar strokes of genius which were most proper to support and illustrate that character. Thus far Mr. Pope. And although much more was to be done before Shakspeare could be restored to himself (such as amending the corrupted text where the printed books afford no assistance; explaining his licentious phraseology and obscure allusions; and illustrating the beauties of his

poetry); yet, with great modesty and prudence, our illustrious editor left this to the critick by profession.

But nothing will give the common reader a better idea of the value of Mr. Pope's edition, than the two attempts which have been since made by Mr. Theobald and Sir Thomas Hanmer in opposition to it; who, although they concerned themselves only in the *first* of these three parts of criticism, the *restoring the text*, (without any conception of the *second*, or venturing even to touch upon the *third*;) yet succeeded so very ill in it, that they left their author in ten times a worse condition than they found him. But, as it was my ill fortune to have some accidental connections with these two gentlemen, it will be incumbent on me to be a little more particular concerning them.

The one was recommended to me as a poor man; the other as a poor critick: and to each of them, at different times, I communicated a great number of observations, which they managed, as they saw fit, to the relief of their several distresses. As to Mr. Theobald, who wanted money, I allowed him to print what I gave him for his own advantage; and he allowed himself in the liberty of taking one part for his own, and sequestering another for the benefit, as I supposed, of some future edition. But, as to the Oxford editor, who wanted nothing but what he might very well be without, the reputation of a critick, I could not so easily forgive him for trafficking with my papers, without my knowledge; and, when that project failed, for employing a number of my conjectures in his edition against my express desire not to have that honour done unto me.

Mr. Theobald was naturally turned to industry

and labour. What he read he could transcribe : but, as what he thought, if ever he did think, he could but ill express, so he read on : and by that means got a character of learning, without risking, to every observer, the imputation of wanting a better talent. By a punctilious collation of the old books, he corrected what was manifestly wrong in the *latter* editions, by what was manifestly right in the *earlier*. And this is his real merit ; and the whole of it. For where the phrase was very obsolete or licentious in the *common* books, or only slightly corrupted in the *other*, he wanted sufficient knowledge of the progress and various stages of the English tongue, as well as acquaintance with the peculiarity of Shakspeare's language, to understand what was right ; nor had he either common judgment to see, or critical sagacity to amend, what was manifestly faulty. Hence he generally exerts his conjectural talent in the wrong place : he tampers with what is sound in the *common* books ; and, in the *old* ones, omits all notice of *variations*, the sense of which he did not understand.

How the Oxford editor came to think himself qualified for this office, from which his whole course of life had been so remote, is still more difficult to conceive. For whatever parts he might have either of genius or erudition, he was absolutely ignorant of the art of criticism, as well as of the poetry of that time, and the language of his author. And so far from a thought of examining the *first* editions, that he even neglected to compare Mr. Pope's, from which he printed his own, with Mr. Theobald's ; whereby he lost the advantage of many fine lines, which the other had recovered from the old quartos. Where he trusts to his own sagacity, in what affects the sense, his

conjectures are generally absurd and extravagant, and violating every rule of criticism. Though, in this rage of correcting, he was not absolutely destitute of all *art*. For, having a number of my conjectures before him, he took as many of them as he saw fit, to work upon; and by changing them to something, he thought, synonymous or similar, he made them his own; and so became a critick at a cheap expence. But how well he hath succeeded in this, as likewise in his conjectures, which are properly his own, will be seen in the course of my remarks; though, as he hath declined to give the reasons for his interpolations, he hath not afforded me so fair a hold of him as Mr. Theobald hath done, who was less cautious. But his principal object was to reform his author's numbers; and this, which he hath done, on every occasion, by the insertion or omission of a set of harmless unconcerning expletives, makes up the gross body of his innocent corrections. And so, in spite of that extreme negligence in numbers, which distinguishes the first dramattick writers, he hath tricked up the old bard, from head to foot, in all the finical exactness of a modern measurer of syllables.

For the rest, all the corrections, which these two editors have made on any *reasonable* foundation, are here admitted into the text; and carefully assigned to their respective authors: a piece of justice which the Oxford editor never did; and which the *other* was not always scrupulous in observing towards me. To conclude with them in a word, they separately possessed those two qualities which, more than any other, have contributed to bring the art of criticism into disrepute, *dulness of apprehension*, and *extravagance of conjecture*.

I am now to give some account of the present

undertaking. For as to all those things which have been published under the titles of *Essays, Remarks, Observations, &c. on Shakspeare*, (if you except some critical notes on *Macbeth*,⁸ given as a specimen of a projected edition, and written, as appears, by a man of parts and genius,) the rest are absolutely below a serious notice.

The whole a critick can do for an author, who deserves his service, is to correct the faulty text; to remark the peculiarities of language; to illustrate the obscure allusions; and to explain the beauties and defects of sentiment or composition. And surely, if ever author had a claim to this service, it was our Shakspeare; who, widely excelling in the knowledge of human nature, hath given to his infinitely varied pictures of it, such truth of design, such force of drawing, such beauty of colouring, as was hardly ever equalled by any writer, whether his aim was the use, or only the entertainment of mankind. The notes in this edition, therefore, take in the whole compass of criticism.

I. The first sort is employed in restoring the poet's genuine text; but in those places only where it labours with inextricable nonsense. In which, how much soever I may have given scope to critical conjecture, where the old copies failed me, I have indulged nothing to fancy or imagination; but have religiously observed the severe canons of literal criticism, as may be seen from the reasons accompanying every alteration of the common text. Nor would a different conduct have become a critick, whose greatest attention, in this part, was to vindicate the established reading from interpola-

* Published in 1745, by Dr. Johnson. REED.

tions occasioned by the fanciful extravagancies of others. I once intended to have given the reader a *body of canons*, for literal criticism, drawn out in form; as well such as concern the art in general, as those that arise from the nature and circumstances of our author's works in particular. And this for two reasons. First, to give the *unlearned reader* a just idea, and consequently a better opinion of the art of criticism, now sunk very low in the popular esteem, by the attempts of some who would needs exercise it without either natural or acquired talents; and by the ill success of others, who seemed to have lost both, when they came to try them upon English authors. Secondly, To deter the *unlearned writer* from wantonly trifling with an art he is a stranger to, at the expence of his own reputation, and the integrity of the text of established authors. But these uses may be well supplied by what is occasionally said upon the subject, in the course of the following remarks.

II. The second sort of notes consists in an explanation of the author's meaning, when by one or more of these causes it becomes obscure; either from a *licentious use of terms*, or a *hard or ungrammatical construction*; or lastly, from *far-fetched or quaint allusions*.

1. This licentious use of words is almost peculiar to the language of Shakspeare. To common terms he hath affixed meanings of his own, unauthorized by use, and not to be justified by analogy. And this liberty he hath taken with the noblest parts of speech, such as *mixed modes*; which, as they are most susceptible of abuse, so their abuse much hurts the clearness of the discourse. The criticks (to whom Shakspeare's licence was still as much a secret as his meaning which that licence

had obscured) fell into two contrary mistakes ; but equally injurious to his reputation and his writings. For some of them, observing a darkness that pervaded his whole expression, have censured him for confusion of ideas and inaccuracy of reasoning. *In the neighing of a horse (says Rymer) or in the growling of a mastiff, there is a meaning, there is a lively expression, and, may I say, more humanity than manytimes in the tragical flights of Shakspeare.* The ignorance of which censure is of a piece with its brutality. The truth is, no one thought clearer, or argued more closely, than this immortal bard. But his superiority of genius less needing the intervention of words in the act of thinking, when he came to draw out his contemplations into discourse, he took up (as he was hurried on by the torrent of his matter) with the first words that lay in his way ; and if, amongst these, there were two *mixed modes* that had but a principal idea in common, it was enough for him ; he regarded them as synonymous, and would use the one for the other without fear or scruple.—Again, there have been others, such as the two last editors, who have fallen into a contrary extreme ; and regarded Shakspeare's anomalies (as we may call them) amongst the corruptions of his text ; which, therefore, they have cashiered in great numbers, to make room for a jargon of their own. This hath put me to additional trouble ; for I had not only their interpolations to throw out again, but the genuine text to replace, and establish in its stead ; which, in many cases, could not be done without showing the peculiar sense of the terms, and explaining the causes which led the poet to so perverse a use of them. I had it once, indeed, in my design, to give a general alphabetick *glossary* of those

terms ; but as each of them is explained in its proper place, there seemed the less occasion for such an index.

2. The poet's hard and unnatural construction had a different original. This was the effect of mistaken art and design. The publick taste was in its infancy; and delighted (as it always does during that state) in the high and turgid; which leads the writer to disguise a vulgar expression with hard and forced construction, whereby the sentence frequently becomes cloudy and dark. Here his criticks show their modesty, and leave him to himself. For the arbitrary change of a word doth little towards dispelling an obscurity that ariseth, not from the licentious use of a single term, but from the unnatural arrangement of a whole sentence. And they risqued nothing by their silence. For Shakspeare was too clear in fame to be suspected of a want of meaning; and too high in fashion for any one to own he needed a critick to find it out. Not but, in his best works, we must allow, he is often so natural and flowing, so pure and correct, that he is even a model for style and language.

3. As to his far-fetched and quaint allusions, these are often a cover to common thoughts; just as his hard construction is to common expression. When they are not so, the explanation of them has this further advantage, that, in clearing the obscurity, you frequently discover some latent conceit not unworthy of his genius.

III. The third and last sort of notes is concerned in a critical explanation of the author's beauties and defects; but chiefly of his beauties, whether in style, thought, sentiment, character, or composition. An odd humour of finding fault hath long prevailed amongst the criticks; as if nothing

were worth *remarking*, that did not, at the same time, deserve to be reproved. Whereas the publick judgment hath less need to be assisted in what it shall reject, than in what it ought to prize; men being generally more ready at spying faults than in discovering beauties. Nor is the value they set upon a work, a certain proof that they understand it. For it is ever seen, that half a dozen voices of credit give the lead: and if the publick chance to be in good humour, or the author much in their favour, the people are sure to follow. Hence it is that the true critick hath so frequently attached himself to works of established reputation; not to teach the world to *admire*, which, in those circumstances, to say the truth, they are apt enough to do of themselves; but to teach them how, *with reason to admire*: no easy matter, I will assure you, on the subject in question: for though it be very true, as Mr. Pope hath observed, that *Shakspeare is the fairest and fullest subject for criticism*, yet it is not such a sort of criticism as may be raised mechanically on the rules which Dacier, Rapin, and Bossu, have collected from antiquity; and of which, such kind of writers as Rymer, Gildon, Dennis, and Oldmixon, have only gathered and chewed the husks: nor on the other hand is it to be formed on the plan of those crude and superficial judgments, on books and things, with which a certain celebrated paper⁹ so much abounds; too good indeed to be named with the writers last mentioned, but being unluckily mistaken for a *model*, because it was an *original*, it hath given rise to a deluge of the worst sort of critical jargon; I mean that which looks most like sense. But the kind of criticism

⁹ The Spectator. REED.

here required, is such as judgeth our author by those only laws and principles on which he wrote, NATURE, and COMMON-SENSE.

Our observations, therefore, being thus extensive, will, I presume, enable the reader to form a right judgment of this favourite poet, without drawing out his character, as was once intended, in a continued discourse.

These, such as they are, were among my younger amusements, when, many years ago, I used to turn over these sort of writers to unbend myself from more serious applications: and what certainly the publick at this time of day had never been troubled with, but for the conduct of the two last editors, and the persuasions of dear Mr. Pope; whose memory and name,

“————— semper acerbum,
“ Semper honoratum (sic Di voluistis) habebo.”

He was desirous I should give a new edition of this poet, as he thought it might contribute to put a stop to a prevailing folly of altering the text of celebrated authors without talents or judgment. And he was willing that *his* edition should be melted down into *mine*, as it would, he said, afford him (so great is the modesty of an ingenuous temper) a fit opportunity of confessing his mistakes.¹ In memory of our friendship, I have, therefore, made it our joint edition. His admirable preface is here added; all his notes are given, with his name annexed; the scenes are divided according to his regulation; and the most beautiful passages distinguished, as in his book, with inverted commas.

¹ See his Letters to me.

In imitation of him, I have done the same by as many others as I thought most deserving of the reader's attention, and have marked them with *double* commas.

If, from all this, Shakspeare or good letters have received any advantage, and the publick any benefit, or entertainment, the thanks are due to the *proprietors*, who have been at the expence of procuring this edition. And I should be unjust to several deserving men of a reputable and useful profession, if I did not, on this occasion, acknowledge the fair dealing I have always found amongst them; and profess my sense of the unjust prejudice which lies against them; whereby they have been, hitherto, unable to procure that security for their property, which they see the rest of their fellow-citizens enjoy. A prejudice in part arising from the frequent *piracies* (as they are called) committed by members of their own body. But such kind of members no body is without. And it would be hard that this should be turned to the discredit of the honest part of the profession, who suffer more from such injuries than any other men. It hath, in part too, arisen from the clamours of profligate scribblers, ever ready, for a piece of money, to prostitute their bad sense for or against any cause profane or sacred; or in any scandal publick or private: these meeting with little encouragement from men of account in the trade (who, even in this enlightened age, are not the very worst judges or rewarders of merit,) apply themselves to people of condition; and support their importunities by false complaints against *booksellers*.

But I should now, perhaps, rather think of my own apology, than busy myself in the defence of others. I shall have some *Tartuffe* ready, on the

first appearance of this edition, to call out again, and tell me, that *I suffer myself to be wholly diverted from my purpose by these matters less suitable to my clerical profession.* “Well, but (says a friend) why not take so candid an intimation in good part? Withdraw yourself again, as you are bid, into the clerical pale; examine the records of sacred and profane antiquity; and, on them, erect a work to the confusion of infidelity.” Why, I have done all this, and more: and hear now what the same men have said to it. They tell me, *I have wrote to the wrong and injury of religion, and furnished out more handles for unbelievers.* “Oh! now the secret is out; and you may have your pardon, I find, upon easier terms. It is only to write no more.”

—Good gentlemen! and shall I not oblige them? They would gladly *obstruct* my way to those things which every man, who *endeavours well* in his profession, must needs think he has some claim to, when he sees them given to those who never did *endeavour*; at the same time that they would *deter* me from taking those advantages which letters enable me to procure for myself. If then I am to write no more (though as much out of my profession as they may please to represent this work, I suspect their modesty would not insist on a scrutiny of our several applications of this profane profit and their purer gains,) if, I say, I am to write no more, let me at least give the publick, who have a better pretence to demand it of me, some reason for my presenting them with these amusements: which, if I am not much mistaken, may be excused by the best and fairest *examples*; and, what is more, may be justified on the surer *reason of things.*

The great Saint CHRYSOSTOM, a name conse-

crated to immortality by his virtue and eloquence, is known to have been so fond of Aristophanes, as to wake with him at his studies, and to sleep with him under his pillow: and I never heard that this was objected either to his piety or his preaching, not even in those times of pure zeal and primitive religion. Yet, in respect of Shakspeare's great sense, Aristophanes's best wit is but buffoonery; and, in comparison of Aristophanes's freedoms, Shakspeare writes with the purity of a vestal. But they will say, St. Chrysostom contracted a fondness for the comick poet *for the sake of his Greek*. To this, indeed, I have nothing to reply. Far be it from me to insinuate so unscholar-like a thing, as if we had the same use for good English, that a Greek had for his Attick elegance. Critick Kuster, in a taste and language peculiar to grammarians of a certain order, hath decreed, that *the history and chronology of Greek words is the most SOLID entertainment of a man of letters*.

I fly then to a higher example, much nearer home, and still more in point, the famous university of OXFORD. This illustrious body, which hath long so justly held, and with such equity dispensed the chief honours of the learned world, thought good letters so much interested in correct editions of the best English writers, that they, very lately, in their publick capacity, undertook *one* of this very author by subscription. And if the editor hath not discharged his task with suitable abilities for one so much honoured by them, this was not their fault, but his, who thrust himself into the employment. After such an example, it would be weakening any defence to seek further for authorities. All that can be now decently urged, is the *reason of the thing*; and this I shall

do, more for the sake of that truly venerable body than my own.

Of all the literary exertions of speculative men, whether designed for the use or entertainment of the world, there are none of so much importance or what are more our immediate concern, than those which let us into the knowledge of our nature. Others may exercise the reason, or amuse the imagination; but these only can improve the heart, and form the human mind to wisdom. Now, in this science, our Shakspeare is confessed to occupy the foremost place; whether we consider the amazing sagacity with which he investigates every hidden spring and wheel of human action; or his happy manner of communicating this knowledge, in the just and living paintings which he has given us of all our passions, appetites, and pursuits. These afford a lesson which can never be too often repeated, or too constantly inculcated; and, to engage the reader's due attention to it, hath been one of the principal objects of this edition.

As this science (whatever profound philosophers may think) is, to the rest, *in things*; so, *in words*, (whatever supercilious pedants may talk) every one's mother tongue is to all other languages. This hath still been the sentiment of nature and true wisdom. Hence, the greatest men of antiquity never thought themselves better employed, than in cultivating their own country idiom. So, Lycurgus did honour to Sparta, in giving the first complete edition of Homer; and Cicero to Rome, in correcting the works of Lucretius. Nor do we want examples of the same good sense in modern times, even amidst the cruel inroads that art and

fashion have made upon nature and the simplicity of wisdom. Menage, the greatest name in France for all kinds of philologick learning, prided himself in writing critical notes on their best lyrick poet Malherbe: and our greater Selden, when he thought it might reflect credit on his country, did not disdain even to comment a very ordinary poet, one Michael Drayton.² But the English tongue, at this juncture, deserves and demands our particular regard. It hath, by means of the many excellent works of different kinds composed in it, engaged the notice, and become the study, of almost every curious and learned foreigner, so as to be thought even a part of literary accomplishment. This must needs make it deserving of a critical attention: and its being yet destitute of a test or standard to apply to, in cases of doubt or difficulty, shows how much it wants that attention. For we have neither GRAMMAR NOR DICTIONARY, neither chart nor compass, to guide us through this wide sea of words. And indeed how should we? since both are to be composed and finished on the authority of our best established writers. But their authority can be of little use, till the text hath been correctly settled, and the phraseology critically

* — our greater Selden, when he thought he might reflect credit on his country, did not disdain to comment a very ordinary poet, one Michael Drayton.] This compliment to himself for condescending to write notes on Shakspeare, Warburton copied from Pope, who sacrificed Drayton to gratify the vanity of this flattering editor: "I have a particular reason (says Pope in a Letter to Warburton) to make you interest yourself in me and my writings. It will cause both them and me to make a better figure to posterity. *A very mediocre poet, one Drayton, is yet taken notice of because Selden writ a few notes on one of his poems.*" Pope's Works, Vol. IX. p. 350, 8vo. 1751.

examined. As, then, by these aids, a *Grammar* and *Dictionary*, planned upon the best rules of logick and philosophy (and none but such will deserve the name,) are to be procured; the forwarding of this will be a general concern: for, as Quintilian observes, “*Verborum proprietas ac differentia omnibus, qui sermonem curæ habent, debet esse communis.*” By this way, the Italians have brought their tongue to a degree of purity and stability, which no living language ever attained unto before. It is with pleasure I observe, that these things now begin to be understood among ourselves; and that I can acquaint the publick, we may soon expect very elegant editions of Fletcher and Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, from gentlemen of distinguished abilities and learning. But this interval of good sense, as it may be short, is indeed but new. For I remember to have heard of a very learned man, who, not long since, formed a design, of giving a more correct edition of Spenser; and, without doubt, would have performed it well; but he was dissuaded from his purpose by his friends, as beneath the dignity of a professor of the occult sciences. Yet these very friends, I suppose, would have thought it added lustre to his high station, to have new-furnished out some dull northern chronicle, or dark Sibylline ænigma. But let it not be thought that what is here said insinuates any thing to the discredit of Greek and Latin criticism. If the follies of particular men were sufficient to bring any branch of learning into disrepute, I do not know any that would stand in a worse situation than that for which I now apologize. For I hardly think there ever appeared, in any *learned* language, so execrable a heap of nonsense, under the name of

commentaries, as hath been lately given us on a certain satyrick poet, of the last age, by his editor and coadjutor.³

I am sensible how unjustly the very best *classical* criticks have been treated. It is said, that our great philosopher⁴ spoke with much contempt of the two finest scholars of this age, Dr. Bentley and Bishop Hare, for squabbling, as he expressed it, about an old play-book; meaning, I suppose, Terence's comedies. But this story is unworthy of him; though well enough suiting the fanatick turn of the wild writer that relates it; such censures are amongst the follies of men immoderately given over to one science, and ignorantly undervaluing all the rest. Those learned criticks might, and perhaps did, laugh in their turn (though still, sure, with the same indecency and indiscretion,) at that incomparable man, for wearing out a long life in poring through a telescope. Indeed, the weaknesses of such are to be mentioned with reverence. But who can bear, without indignation, the fashionable cant of every trifling writer, whose insipidity passes, with himself, for politeness, for pretending to be shocked, forsooth, with the rude and savage air of *vulgar* criticks; meaning such as Muretus, Scaliger, Casaubon, Salmasius, Spanheim, Bentley! When, had it not been for the deathless labours of such as these, the western world, at the revival of letters, had soon fallen back again into a state of ignorance and barbarity, as deplorable as that from which Providence had just redeemed it.

³ This alludes to Dr. Grey's edition of *Hudibras* published in 1744. REED.

⁴ Sir Isaac Newton. See Whiston's *Historical Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Clarke*, 1748, 8vo. p. 113. REED.

To conclude with an observation of a fine writer and great philosopher of our own; which I would gladly bind, though with all honour, as a phylactery, on the brow of every awful grammarian, to teach him at once the *use* and *limits* of his art: WORDS ARE THE MONEY OF FOOLS, AND THE COUNTERS OF WISE MEN.

DR. JOHNSON'S
P R E F A C E.

THAT praises are without reason lavished on the dead, and that the honours due only to excellence are paid to antiquity, is a complaint likely to be always continued by those, who, being able to add nothing to truth, hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox; or those, who, being forced by disappointment upon consolatory expedients, are willing to hope from posterity what the present age refuses, and flatter themselves that the regard which is yet denied by envy, will be at last bestowed by time.

Antiquity, like every other quality that attracts the notice of mankind, has undoubtedly votaries

* First printed in 1765.

that reverence it, not from reason, but from prejudice. Some seem to admire indiscriminately whatever has been long preserved, without considering that time has sometimes co-operated with chance; all perhaps are more willing to honour past than present excellence; and the mind contemplates genius through the shades of age, as the eye surveys the sun through artificial opacity. The great contention of criticism is to find the faults of the moderns, and the beauties of the ancients. While an author is yet living, we estimate his powers by his worst performance; and when he is dead, we rate them by his best.

To works, however, of which the excellence is not absolute and definite, but gradual and comparative; to works not raised upon principles demonstrative and scientifick, but appealing wholly to observation and experience, no other test can be applied than length of duration and continuance of esteem. What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared, and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour. As among the works of nature no man can properly call a river deep, or a mountain high, without the knowledge of many mountains, and many rivers; so in the production of genius, nothing can be styled excellent till it has been compared with other works of the same kind. Demonstration immediately displays its power, and has nothing to hope or fear from the flux of years; but works tentative and experimental must be estimated by their proportion to the general and collective ability of man, as it is discovered in a long succession of endeavours. Of the first building that was raised, it might be with certainty determined

that it was round or square; but whether it was spacious or lofty must have been referred to time. The Pythagorean scale of numbers was at once discovered to be perfect; but the poems of Homer we yet know not to transcend the common limits of human intelligence, but by remarking, that nation after nation, and century after century, has been able to do little more than transpose his incidents, new name his characters, and paraphrase his sentiments.

The reverence due to writings that have long subsisted arises therefore not from any credulous confidence in the superior wisdom of past ages, or gloomy persuasion of the degeneracy of mankind, but is the consequence of acknowledged and indubitable positions, that what has been longest known has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood.

The poet, of whose works I have undertaken the revision, may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of an established fame and prescriptive veneration. He has long outlived his century,⁶ the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit. Whatever advantages he might once derive from personal allusions, local customs, or temporary opinions, have for many years been lost; and every topick of merriment or motive of sorrow, which the modes of artificial life afforded him, now only obscure the scenes which they once illuminated. The effects of favour and competition are at an end; the tradition of his friendships and his enmities has perished; his works support no opinion with arguments, nor

⁶ "Est vetus atque probus, centum qui perficit annos." *Hor.*
STEEVENS.

supply any faction with invectives ; they can neither indulge vanity, nor gratify malignity ; but are read without any other reason than the desire of pleasure, and are therefore praised only as pleasure is obtained ; yet, thus unassisted by interest or passion, they have past through variations of taste and changes of manners, and, as they devolved from one generation to another, have received new honours at every transmission.

But because human judgment, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty, never becomes infallible ; and approbation, though long continued, may yet be only the approbation of prejudice or fashion ; it is proper to inquire, by what peculiarities of excellence Shakspeare has gained and kept the favour of his countrymen.

Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and therefore few only can judge how nearly they are copied. The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight awhile, by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest ; the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted, and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth.

Shakspeare is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature ; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world ; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers ; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions : they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will

always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakspeare it is commonly a species.

It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruction is derived. It is this which fills the plays of Shakspeare with practical axioms and domestick wisdom. It was said of Euripides, that every verse was a precept; and it may be said of Shakspeare, that from his works may be collected a system of civil and œconomical prudence. Yet his real power is not shown in the splendor of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable, and the tenor of his dialogue; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.

It will not easily be imagined how much Shakspeare excels in accommodating his sentiments to real life, but by comparing him with other authors. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of Shakspeare. The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topicks which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this author is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so

much ease and simplicity, that it seems scarcely to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned by diligent selection out of common conversation, and common occurrences.

Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady, and a rival into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture, and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolical joy and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered, is the business of a modern dramatist. For this, probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved. But love is only one of many passions, and as it has no great influence upon the sum of life, it has little operation in the dramas of a poet, who caught his ideas from the living world, and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew, that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity.

Characters thus ample and general were not easily discriminated and preserved, yet perhaps no poet ever kept his personages more distinct from each other. I will not say with Pope, that every speech may be assigned to the proper speaker, because many speeches there are which have nothing characteristical; but, perhaps, though some may be equally adapted to every person, it will be difficult to find any that can be properly transferred from the present possessor to another claimant. The choice is right, when there is reason for choice.

Other dramatists can only gain attention by hyperbolical or aggravated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity, as the writers of barbarous romances invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf; and he that should form his expectation of human affairs from the play, or from the tale, would be equally deceived. Shakspeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion: even where the agency is super-natural, the dialogue is level with life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents; so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world: Shakspeare approximates the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen, but if it were possible, its effects would probably be such as he has assigned;⁷ and it may be said, that he has not only shown human nature as it acts in real exigencies, but as it would be found in trials, to which it cannot be exposed.

This therefore is the praise of Shakspeare, that his drama is the mirror of life; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language; by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

⁷ "Quærit quod nusquam est gentium, reperit tamen,
 "Facit illud verisimile quod mendacium est."
 Plauti *Pseudolus*, Act I. sc. iv. STEEVENS.

His adherence to general nature has exposed him to the censure of criticks, who form their judgments upon narrower principles. Dennis and Rymer think his Romans not sufficiently Roman; and Voltaire censures his kings as not completely royal. Dennis is offended, that Menenius, a senator of Rome, should play the buffoon; and Voltaire perhaps thinks decency violated when the Danish usurper is represented as a drunkard. But Shakspeare always makes nature predominate over accident; and if he preserves the essential character, is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious. His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that Rome, like every other city, had men of all dispositions; and wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to show an usurper and a murderer not only odious, but despicable; he therefore added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like other men, and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty minds; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.

The censure which he has incurred by mixing comick and tragick scenes, as it extends to all his works, deserves more consideration. Let the fact be first stated, and then examined.

Shakspeare's plays are not in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind; exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of

combination; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another; in which, at the same time, the reveller is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolick of another; and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

Out of this chaos of mingled purposes and casualties, the ancient poets, according to the laws which custom had prescribed, selected some the crimes of men, and some their absurdities: some the momentous vicissitudes of life, and some the lighter occurrences; some the terrors of distress, and some the gayeties of prosperity. Thus rose the two modes of imitation, known by the names of *tragedy* and *comedy*, compositions intended to promote different ends by contrary means, and considered as so little allied, that I do not recollect among the Greeks or Romans a single writer who attempted both.*

* From this remark it appears, that Dr. Johnson was unacquainted with the *Cyclops* of Euripides.

It may, however, be observed, that Dr. Johnson, perhaps, was misled by the following passage in Dryden's *Essay on Dramatick Poesy*: "Tragedies and Comedies were not writ then as they are now, promiscuously, by the same person; but he who found his genius bending to the one, never attempted the other way. This is so plain, that I need not instance to you that Aristophanes, Plautus, Terence, never any of them writ a tragedy; Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, and Seneca, never meddled with comedy: the sock and buskin were not worn by the same poet." And yet, to show the uncertain state of Dryden's memory, in his Dedication to his Juvenal he has expended at least a page in describing the *Cyclops* of Euripides.

So intimately connected with this subject are the following remarks of Mr. Twining in his excellent commentary on the

Shakspeare has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow not only in one mind, but in

Poetick of Aristotle, that they ought not to be withheld from our readers.

“ The prejudiced admirers of the ancients are very angry at the least insinuation that *they* had any idea of our *barbarous* tragi-comedy. But, after all, it cannot be dissembled, that, if they had not the *name*, they had the *thing*, or something very nearly approaching to it. If that be tragi-comedy, which is partly serious and partly comical, I do not know why we should scruple to say, that the *Alcestis* of Euripides is, *to all intents and purposes*, a tragi-comedy. I have not the least doubt, that it had upon an Athenian audience the proper *effect* of tragi-comedy; that is, that in some places it made them cry, and in others, laugh. And the best thing we have to hope, for the credit of Euripides, is, that he *intended* to produce this effect. For though he may be an unskilful poet, who *purposes* to write a tragi-comedy, *he* surely is a more unskilful poet, who writes one without knowing it.

“ The learned reader will understand me to allude particularly to the scene, in which the domestick describes the behaviour of Hercules; and to the speech of Hercules himself, which follows. Nothing can well be of a more comick cast than the servant's complaint. He describes the hero as the most greedy and ill-mannered guest he had ever attended, under his master's hospitable roof; calling about him, eating, drinking, and *singing, in a room by himself*, while the master and all the family were in the height of funereal lamentation. He was not contented with such refreshments as had been set before him:

‘ ———— ἔτι σωφρονως ἐδεξάτο

‘ Τα προστυχόντα ξενία——

‘ Ἀλλ’ εἰ τι μὴ φεροίμεν, ΩΤΡΥΤΝΕΝ φερεῖν.’

Then he drinks—

‘ Ἔως ἐθερμῆν’ αὐτον ἀμφιβασα φλοξ

‘ Οἶνῳ· ————’

—crowns himself with myrtle, and sings, ΑΜΟΥΣ’ ΤΛΑΚΤΩΝ— and all this, alone. ‘ *Cette description,*’ says Fontenelle, ‘ est si burlesque, qu'on diroit d'un crocheteur qui est de confrairie.’ A censure somewhat justified by Euripides himself, who makes the servant take Hercules for a *thief*:

‘ ———— πανθέρων ΚΛΩΠΙΑ και ΔΗΙΣΤΗΝ τινα.’

“ The speech of Hercules, φιλοσοφεντος ἐν μεθύ, as the scholiast observes (v. 776,) ‘ philosophizing in his cups,’ is still more

one composition. Almost all his plays are divided between serious and ludicrous characters, and, in

curious. It is, indeed, full of the *φλοξ οίνου*, and completely justifies the attendant's description. Nothing can be more *jolly*. It is in the true spirit of a modern drinking song; recommending it to the servant to uncloud his brow, enjoy the present hour, think nothing of the morrow, and drown his cares in *love and wine*:

‘ ὍΤΤΟΣ—τι σεμνον και πεφροντικῶ βλεπεις ;

‘ Ου χρη σκυθρωπον, κ. τ. αλ.

‘ ΔΕΥΡ’ ἘΛΘ’, ὅπως ἂν και σοφωτερος γενη.

‘ Τα θνητα πραγματ’ οἶδας ἤν ἔχει φυσικῶ :

‘ ΟΙΜΑΙ μεν ὍΤ’ ΠΟΘΕΝ ΓΑΡ;—ἀλλ’ ἀκθε με.

‘ Βροτοις ἀπασι κατθανειν οἴφειλεται,

‘ Κ’ οκ ἔστι θνητων ὅστις ἐξεπιλαται

‘ Την ἀυριον μελλησαν ἐι βιωσεται.

‘ Ευφραινε σαυτον ΠΙΝΕ!—τον καθ ἡμεραν

‘ Βιον λογιζε σον, τα δ’ ἄλλα, της τυχης.

‘ Τιμα δε και την πλειστον ἡδιστην θεων

‘ ΚΥΠΡΙΝ βροτοισιν— κ. τ. λ.’ V. 763—812.

“ If any man can read this, without supposing it to have *set* the audience in a *roar*, I certainly cannot demonstrate that he is mistaken. I can only say, that I think he must be a very grave man himself, and must forget that the Athenians were not a very grave people. The zeal of Pere Brumoy in defending this tragedy, betrays him into a little indiscretion. He says, ‘ tout cela à fait penser à quelques critiques modernes que cette piece etoit une tragi-comedie ; chimere inconnu aux anciens. Cette piece est du gout des autres tragedies antiques.’ Indeed they, who call this play a tragi-comedy, give it rather a favourable name; for, in the scenes alluded to, it is, in fact, of a lower species than our tragi-comedy: it is rather *burlesque tragedy*; what Demetrius calls *τραγωδια παιζησα*. Much of the comick cast prevails in other scenes; though mixed with those genuine strokes of simple and universal nature, which abound in this poet, and which I should be sorry to exchange for that monotonous and unaffecting level of tragick dignity, which never falls, and never rises.

“ I will only mention one more instance of this tragi-comick mixture, and that from Sophocles. The dialogue between Mi-

the successive evolutions of the design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow, and sometimes levity and laughter.

nerva and Ulysses, in the first scene of the *Ajax*, from v. 74 to 88, is perfectly ludicrous. The cowardice of Ulysses is almost as comick as the cowardice of Falstaff. In spite of the presence of Minerva, and her previous assurance that she would effectually guard him from all danger by rendering him invisible, when she calls Ajax out, Ulysses, in the utmost trepidation, exclaims—

‘Τι θρας, Αθανα; μηδαμως σφ’ εξω καλει.’

‘What are you about, Minerva?—by no means call him out.’
Minerva answers—

‘Ου σιγ’ ανεξη, μηδε δειλιαν αρεις;’

‘Will you not be silent, and lay aside your fears?’

But Ulysses cannot conquer his fears:—

‘ΜΗ. ΠΡΟΣ ΘΕΩΝ—αλλ’ ενδον αρκειτω μενων.’

‘Don’t call him out, for heaven’s sake:—let him stay within.’

And in this tone the conversation continues; till, upon Minerva’s repeating her promise that Ajax should not see him, he consents to stay; but in a line of most comical reluctance, and with an *aside*, that is in the true spirit of Sancho Pança:—

‘Μενοιμ’ αν’ ΗΘΕΛΟΝ Δ’ΑΝ ΕΚΤΟΣ ΩΝ ΤΥΧΕΙΝ.’

‘I’ll stay—(*aside*) but I wish I was not here.’

‘J’avoue,’ says Brumoy, ‘que ce trait n’est pas à la louange d’Ulyse, ni de Sophocle.’

“No unprejudiced person, I think, can read this scene without being convinced, not only, that it must actually have produced, but that it must have been *intended* to produce, the effect of comedy.

“It appears indeed to me, that we may plainly trace in the Greek tragedy, with all its improvements, and all its beauties, pretty strong marks of its popular and *tragi-comick* origin. For *Τραγωδια*, we are told, was, originally, the only dramatick appellation; and when, afterwards, the *ludicrous* was separated from the *serious*, and distinguished by its appropriated name of *Comedy*, the separation seems to have been imperfectly made, and *Tragedy*, distinctively so called, still seems to have retained a tincture of its original merriment. Nor will this appear strange, if we consider the popular nature of the Greek spectacles. The *people*, it is probable, would still require, even in the midst of their tragick emotion, a little *dash* of their old satyrick *fun*, and poets were obliged to comply, in some degree, with their taste.” *Twining’s Notes*, pp. 202, 203, 204, 205, 206.

STEEVENS.

That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed; but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both in its alternations of exhibition, and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life, by showing how great machinations and slender designs may promote or obviate one another, and the high and the low co-operate in the general system by unavoidable concatenation.

It is objected, that by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression, and that the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incidents, wants at last the power to move, which constitutes the perfection of dramattick poetry. This reasoning is so specious, that it is received as true even by those who in daily experience feel it to be false. The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion. Fiction cannot move so much, but that the attention may be easily transferred; and though it must be allowed that pleasing melancholy be sometimes interrupted by unwelcome levity, yet let it be considered likewise, that melancholy is often not pleasing, and that the disturbance of one man may be the relief of another; that different auditors have different habitudes; and that, upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety.

The players, who in their edition divided our author's works into comedies, histories, and tragedies, seem not to have distinguished the three kinds, by any very exact or definite ideas.

An action which ended happily to the principal persons, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents, in their opinion constituted a comedy. This idea of a comedy continued long amongst us, and plays were written, which, by changing the catastrophe, were tragedies to-day, and comedies to-morrow."

Tragedy was not in those times a poem of more general dignity or elevation than comedy; it required only a calamitous conclusion, with which the common criticism of that age was satisfied, whatever lighter pleasure it afforded in its progress.

History was a series of actions, with no other than chronological succession, independent on each other, and without any tendency to introduce and regulate the conclusion. It is not always very nicely distinguished from tragedy. There is not much nearer approach to unity of action in the tragedy of *Antony and Cleopatra*, than in the history of *Richard the Second*. But a history might be continued through many plays; as it had no plan, it had no limits.

Through all these denominations of the drama, Shakspeare's mode of composition is the same; an interchange of seriousness and merriment, by which the mind is softened at one time, and exhilarated at another. But whatever be his purpose, whether to gladden or depress, or to conduct the story, without vehemence or emotion, through tracts of easy and familiar dialogue, he never fails to attain his

⁹ Thus, says Downes the Prompter, p. 22; "The tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* was made some time after [1662] into a tragi-comedy, by Mr. James Howard, he preserving Romeo and Juliet alive; so that when the tragedy was revived again, 'twas play'd alternately, tragical one day, and tragi-comical another, for several days together." STEEVENS.

purpose ; as he commands us, we laugh or mourn, or sit silent with quiet expectation, in tranquillity without indifference.

When Shakspeare's plan is understood, most of the criticisms of Rymer and Voltaire vanish away. The play of *Hamlet* is opened, without impropriety, by two centinels; Iago bellows at Brabantio's window, without injury to the scheme of the play, though in terms which a modern audience would not easily endure ; the character of Polonius is reasonable and useful ; and the Gravediggers themselves may be heard with applause.

Shakspeare engaged in dramattick poetry with the world open before him ; the rules of the ancients were yet known to few ; the publick judgment was unformed ; he had no example of such fame as might force him upon imitation, nor criticks of such authority as might restrain his extravagance : he therefore indulged his natural disposition, and his disposition, as Rymer has remarked, led him to comedy. In tragedy he often writes with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity ; but in his comick scenes, he seems to produce without labour, what no labour can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comick, but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragick scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy for the greater part by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct.¹

¹ In the rank and order of geniuses it must, I think, be allowed, that the writer of good tragedy is superior. And there-

The force of his comick scenes has suffered little diminution from the changes made by a century and a half, in manners or in words. As his personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places; they are natural, and therefore durable; the adventitious peculiarities of personal habits, are only superficial dyes, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tinct, without any remains of former lustre; and the discrimination of true passion are the colours of nature; they pervade the whole mass, and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance that combined them; but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase, nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabricks of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of Shakspeare.

If there be, what I believe there is, in every nation, a style which never becomes obsolete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language, as to remain settled and unaltered: this style is probably to be sought in the common intercourse of life, among those who speak only to be understood, without ambition of elegance.

fore, I think the opinion, which I am sorry to perceive gains ground, that Shakspeare's chief and predominant talent lay in comedy, tends to lessen the unrivalled excellence of our divine bard. J. WARTON.

See Vol. XIX. p. 529, for Philips's remark on this subject.

STEEVENS.

The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hope of finding or making better; those who wish for distinction forsake the vulgar, when the vulgar is right; but there is a conversation above grossness and below refinement, where propriety resides, and where this poet seems to have gathered his comick dialogue. He is therefore more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other author equally remote, and among his other excellencies deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.

These observations are to be considered not as unexceptionably constant, but as containing general and predominant truth. Shakspeare's familiar dialogue is affirmed to be smooth and clear, yet not wholly without ruggedness or difficulty; as a country may be eminently fruitful, though it has spots unfit for cultivation: his characters are praised as natural, though their sentiments are sometimes forced, and their actions improbable; as the earth upon the whole is spherical, though its surface is varied with protuberances and cavities.

Shakspeare with his excellencies has likewise faults, and faults sufficient to obscure and overwhelm any other merit. I shall show them in the proportion in which they appear to me, without envious malignity or superstitious veneration. No question can be more innocently discussed than a dead poet's pretensions to renown; and little regard is due to that bigotry which sets candour higher than truth.

His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write

without any moral purpose. From his writings indeed a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate; for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place.

The plots are often so loosely formed, that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued, that he seems not always fully to comprehend his own design. He omits opportunities of instructing or delighting, which the train of his story seems to force upon him, and apparently rejects those exhibitions which would be more affecting, for the sake of those which are more easy.

It may be observed, that in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected. When he found himself near the end of his work, and in view of his reward, he shortened the labour to snatch the profit. He therefore remits his efforts where he should most vigorously exert them, and his catastrophe is improbably produced or imperfectly represented.

He had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expence not only of likelihood, but of possibility. These faults Pope has endeavoured, with more zeal than judgment, to transfer to his imagined interpolators. We need not wonder to find Hector

quoting Aristotle, when we see the loves of Theseus and Hippolyta combined with the Gothick mythology of fairies. Shakspeare, indeed, was not the only violator of chronology, for in the same age Sidney, who wanted not the advantages of learning, has, in his *Arcadia*, confounded the pastoral with the feudal times, the days of innocence, quiet, and security, with those of turbulence, violence, and adventure.²

In his comick scenes he is seldom very successful, when he engages his characters in reciprocations of smartness and contests of sarcasm; their jests are commonly gross, and their pleasantry licentious; neither his gentlemen nor his ladies have much delicacy, nor are sufficiently distinguished from his clowns by any appearance of refined manners. Whether he represented the real conversa-

* As a further extenuation of Shakspeare's error, it may be urged that he found the Gothick mythology of Fairies already incorporated with Greek and Roman story, by our early translators. Phaer and Golding, who first gave us Virgil and Ovid in an English dress, introduce Fairies almost as often as Nymphs are mentioned in these classick authors. Thus, Homer, in his 24th *Iliad*:

“ Ἐν Σιπύλω, ὅθι φασὶ θεῶν ἔμμεναι εὐνάς

“ ΝΥΜΦΑΩΝ, α.τ' ἀμφ' Ἀχελῷον ἔρρωσαντο.”

But Chapman translates—

“ In Syphilus—in that place where 'tis said

“ The goddesse *Fairies* use to dance about the funeral bed

“ Of Achelous:————.”

Neither are our ancient versifiers less culpable on the score of anachronisms. Under their hands the *balista* becomes a *cannon*, and other modern instruments are perpetually substituted for such as were the produce of the remotest ages.

It may be added, that in Arthur Hall's version of the fourth *Iliad*, Juno says to Jupiter:

“ ——— the time will come that *Totnam French* shal turn.”

And in the tenth Book we hear of “ *The Bastile*,” “ *Lemster wooll*,” and “ *The Byble*.” STEEVENS.

tion of his time is not easy to determine; the reign of Elizabeth is commonly supposed to have been a time of stateliness, formality, and reserve, yet perhaps the relaxations of that severity were not very elegant. There must, however, have been always some modes of gaiety preferable to others, and a writer ought to choose the best.

In tragedy his performance seems constantly to be worse, as his labour is more. The effusions of passion, which exigence forces out, are for the most part striking and energetick; but whenever he solicits his invention, or strains his faculties, the offspring of his throes is tumour, meanness, tediousness, and obscurity.

In narration he affects a disproportionate pomp of diction, and a wearisome train of circumlocution, and tells the incident imperfectly in many words, which might have been more plainly delivered in few. Narration in dramattick poetry is naturally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive, and obstructs the progress of the action; it should therefore always be rapid, and enlivened by frequent interruption. Shakspeare found it an incumbrance, and instead of lightening it by brevity, endeavoured to recommend it by dignity and splendour.

His declamations or set speeches are commonly cold and weak, for his power was the power of nature; when he endeavoured, like other tragick writers, to catch opportunities of amplification, and instead of inquiring what the occasion demanded, to show how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.

It is incident to him to be now and then entangled with an unwieldy sentiment, which he can-

not well express, and will not reject ; he struggles with it a while, and if it continues stubborn, comprises it in words such as occur, and leaves it to be disentangled and evolved by those who have more leisure to bestow upon it.

Not that always where the language is intricate, the thought is subtle, or the image always great where the line is bulky ; the equality of words to things is very often neglected, and trivial sentiments and vulgar ideas disappoint the attention, to which they are recommended by sonorous epithets and swelling figures.

But the admirers of this great poet have most reason to complain when he approaches nearest to his highest excellence, and seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection, and mollify them with tender emotions by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. What he does best, he soon ceases to do. He is not long soft and pathetick without some idle conceit, or contemptible equivocation. He no sooner begins to move, than he counteracts himself ; and terror and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity.

A quibble is to Shakspeare, what luminous vapours are to the traveller ; he follows it at all adventures ; it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disquisitions, whether he be enlarging knowledge, or exalting affection, whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchaining it in suspense, let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside

from his career, or stoop from his elevation. A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it by the sacrifice of reason, propriety, and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it.

It will be thought strange, that, in enumerating the defects of this writer, I have not yet mentioned his neglect of the unities; his violation of those laws which have been instituted and established by the joint authority of poets and of criticks.

For his other deviations from the art of writing, I resign him to critical justice, without making any other demand in his favour, than that which must be indulged to all human excellence; that his virtues be rated with his failings: but, from the censure which this irregularity may bring upon him, I shall, with due reverence to that learning which I must oppose, adventure to try how I can defend him.

His histories, being neither tragedies nor comedies, are not subject to any of their laws; nothing more is necessary to all the praise which they expect, than that the changes of action be so prepared as to be understood, that the incidents be various and affecting, and the characters consistent, natural, and distinct. No other unity is intended, and therefore none is to be sought.

In his other works he has well enough preserved the unity of action. He has not, indeed, an intrigue regularly perplexed and regularly unravelled; he does not endeavour to hide his design only to discover it, for this is seldom the order of real events, and Shakspeare is the poet of nature: but his plan has commonly what Aristotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end; one

event is concatenated with another, and the conclusion follows by easy consequence. There are perhaps some incidents that might be spared, as in other poets there is much talk that only fills up time upon the stage; but the general system makes gradual advances, and the end of the play is the end of expectation.

To the unities of time and place³ he has shown no regard; and perhaps a nearer view of the principles on which they stand will diminish their value, and withdraw from them the veneration which, from the time of Corneille, they have very generally received, by discovering that they have given more trouble to the poet, than pleasure to the auditor.

The necessity of observing the unities of time and place arises from the supposed necessity of making the drama credible. The criticks hold it impossible, that an action of months or years can be possibly believed to pass in three hours; or that the spectator can suppose himself to sit in the theatre, while ambassadors go and return between distant kings, while armies are levied and towns besieged, while an exile wanders and returns, or till he whom they saw courting his mistress, shall lament the untimely fall of his son. The mind revolts from evident falsehood, and fiction loses its

³ — unities of time and place —] Mr. Twining, among his judicious remarks on the poetick of Aristotle, observes, that "with respect to the strict unities of *time* and *place*, no such rules were imposed on the Greek poets by the criticks, or by themselves; nor are imposed on *any* poet, either by the *nature*, or the *end*, of the dramattick imitation itself."

Aristotle does not express a single precept concerning unity of *place*. This supposed restraint originated from the hypercriticism of his French commentators. STEEVENS.

force when it departs from the resemblance of reality.

From the narrow limitation of time necessarily arises the contraction of place. The spectator, who knows that he saw the first Act at Alexandria, cannot suppose that he sees the next at Rome, at a distance to which not the dragons of Medea could, in so short a time, have transported him; he knows with certainty that he has not changed his place; and he knows that place cannot change itself; that what was a house cannot become a plain; that what was Thebes can never be Persepolis.

Such is the triumphant language with which a critick exults over the misery of an irregular poet, and exults commonly without resistance or reply. It is time therefore to tell him, by the authority of Shakspeare, that he assumes, as an unquestionable principle, a position, which, while his breath is forming it into words, his understanding pronounces to be false. It is false, that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramattick fable in its materiality was ever credible, or, for a single moment, was ever credited.

The objection arising from the impossibility of passing the first hour at Alexandria, and the next at Rome, supposes, that when the play opens, the spectator really imagines himself at Alexandria, and believes that his walk to the theatre has been a voyage to Egypt, and that he lives in the days of Antony and Cleopatra. Surely he that imagines this may imagine more. He that can take the stage at one time for the palace of the Ptolemies, may take it in half an hour for the promontory of Actium. Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation; if the spectator can be once

persuaded, that his old acquaintance are Alexander and Cæsar, that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of Pharsalia, or the bank of Granicus, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason, or of truth, and from the heights of empyrean poetry, may despise the circumscriptions of terrestrial nature. There is no reason why a mind thus wandering in ecstasy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brains that can make the stage a field.

The truth is,⁴ that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first Act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players. They come to hear a certain number of lines recited with just gesture and elegant modulation. The lines relate to some action, and an action must be in some place; but the different actions that complete a story may be in places very remote from each other; and where is the absurdity of allowing that space to represent first Athens, and then Sicily, which was always known to be neither Sicily nor Athens, but a modern theatre?

By supposition, as place is introduced, time may be extended; the time required by the fable elapses for the most part between the acts; for, of so much

⁴ So in the Epistle Dedicatory to Dryden's *Love Triumphant*: "They who will not allow this liberty to a poet, make it a very ridiculous thing, for an audience to suppose themselves sometimes to be in a field, sometimes in a garden, and at other times in a chamber. There are not, indeed, so many absurdities in their supposition, as in ours; but 'tis an original absurdity for the audience to suppose themselves to be in any other place, than in the very *theatre* in which they sit; which is neither a chamber, nor garden, nor yet a publick place of any business but that of the representation." STEEVENS.

of the action as is represented, the real and poetical duration is the same. If, in the first Act, preparations for war against Mithridates are represented to be made in Rome, the event of the war may, without absurdity, be represented, in the catastrophe, as happening in Pontus; we know that there is neither war, nor preparation for war; we know that we are neither in Rome nor Pontus; that neither Mithridates nor Lucullus are before us. The drama exhibits successive imitations of successive actions, and why may not the second imitation represent an action that happened years after the first; if it be so connected with it, that nothing but time can be supposed to intervene? Time is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination; a lapse of years is as easily conceived as a passage of hours. In contemplation we easily contract the time of real actions, and therefore willingly permit it to be contracted when we only see their imitation.

It will be asked, how the drama moves, if it is not credited. It is credited with all the credit due to a drama. It is credited, whenever it moves, as a just picture of a real original; as representing to the auditor what he would himself feel, if he were to do or suffer what is there feigned to be suffered or to be done. The reflection that strikes the heart is not, that the evils before us are real evils, but that they are evils to which we ourselves may be exposed. If there be any fallacy, it is not that we fancy the players, but that we fancy ourselves unhappy for a moment; but we rather lament the possibility than suppose the presence of misery, as a mother weeps over her babe, when she remembers that death may take it from her. The delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fic-

tion; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more.

Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind. When the imagination is recreated by a painted landscape, the trees are not supposed capable to give us shade, or the fountains coolness; but we consider, how we should be pleased with such fountains playing beside us, and such woods waving over us. We are agitated in reading the history of *Henry the Fifth*, yet no man takes his book for the field of Agincourt. A dramattick exhibition is a book recited with concomitants that increase or diminish its effect. Familiar comedy is often more powerful on the theatre, than in the page; imperial tragedy is always less. The humour of *Petruchio* may be heightened by grimace; but what voice or what gesture can hope to add dignity or force to the soliloquy of *Cato*?

A play read, affects the mind like a play acted. It is therefore evident, that the action is not supposed to be real; and it follows, that between the Acts a longer or shorter time may be allowed to pass, and that no more account of space or duration is to be taken by the auditor of a drama, than by the reader of a narrative, before whom may pass in an hour the life of a hero, or the revolutions of an empire.

Whether Shakspeare knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide, and useless to enquire. We may reasonably suppose, that, when he rose to notice, he did not want the counsels and admonitions of scholars and criticks, and that he at last deliberately persisted in a practice, which he might have begun by chance.

As nothing is essential to the fable, but unity of action, and as the unities of time and place arise evidently from false assumptions, and, by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it much to be lamented, that they were not known by him, or not observed: nor, if such another poet could arise, should I very vehemently reproach him, that his first Act passed at Venice, and his next in Cyprus. Such violations of rules merely positive, become the comprehensive genius of Shakspeare, and such censures are suitable to the minute and slender criticism of Voltaire:

“ Non usque adeo permiscuit imis
 “ Longus summa dies, ut non, si voce Metelli
 “ Serventur leges, malint a Cæsare tolli.”

Yet when I speak thus slightly of dramattick rules, I cannot but recollect how much wit and learning may be produced against me; before such authorities I am afraid to stand, not that I think the present question one of those that are to be decided by mere authority, but because it is to be suspected, that these precepts have not been so easily received, but for better reasons than I have yet been able to find. The result of my inquiries, in which it would be ludicrous to boast of impartiality, is, that the unities of time and place are not essential to a just drama, that though they may sometimes conduce to pleasure, they are always to be sacrificed to the nobler beauties of variety and instruction; and that a play, written with nice observation of critical rules, is to be contemplated as an elaborate curiosity, as the product of superfluous and ostentatious art, by which is shown, rather what is possible, than what is necessary.

He that, without diminution of any other excellence, shall preserve all the unities unbroken, deserves the like applause with the architect, who shall display all the orders of architecture in a citadel, without any deduction from its strength; but the principal beauty of a citadel is to exclude the enemy; and the greatest graces of a play are to copy nature, and instruct life.

Perhaps, what I have here not dogmatically but deliberately written, may recall the principles of the drama to a new examination. I am almost frightened at my own temerity; and when I estimate the fame and the strength of those that maintain the contrary opinion, am ready to sink down in reverential silence; as Æneas withdrew from the defence of Troy, when he saw Neptune shaking the wall, and Juno heading the besiegers.

Those whom my arguments cannot persuade to give their approbation to the judgment of Shakespeare, will easily, if they consider the condition of his life, make some allowance for his ignorance.

Every man's performances, to be rightly estimated, must be compared to the state of the age in which he lived, and with his own particular opportunities; and though to a reader a book be not worse or better for the circumstances of the author, yet as there is always a silent reference of human works to human abilities, and as the enquiry, how far man may extend his designs, or how high he may rate his native force, is of far greater dignity than in what rank we shall place any particular performance, curiosity is always busy to discover the instruments, as well as to survey the workmanship, to know how much is to be ascribed to original powers, and how much to casual and adventi-

tious help. The palaces of Peru or Mexico were certainly mean and incommodious habitations, if compared to the houses of European monarchs; yet who could forbear to view them with astonishment, who remembered that they were built without the use of iron?

The English nation, in the time of Shakspeare, was yet struggling to emerge from barbarity. The philology of Italy had been transplanted hither in the reign of Henry the Eighth; and the learned languages had been successfully cultivated by Lilly, Linacre, and More; by Pole, Cheke, and Gardiner; and afterwards by Smith, Clerk, Haddon, and Ascham. Greek was now taught to boys in the principal schools; and those who united elegance with learning, read, with great diligence, the Italian and Spanish poets. But literature was yet confined to professed scholars, or to men and women of high rank. The publick was gross and dark; and to be able to read and write, was an accomplishment still valued for its rarity.

Nations, like individuals, have their infancy. A people newly awakened to literary curiosity, being yet unacquainted with the true state of things, knows not how to judge of that which is proposed as its resemblance. Whatever is remote from common appearances is always welcome to vulgar, as to childish credulity; and of a country unenlightened by learning, the whole people is the vulgar. The study of those who then aspired to plebeian learning was laid out upon adventures, giants, dragons, and enchantments. *The Death of Arthur* was the favourite volume.

The mind, which has feasted on the luxurious wonders of fiction, has no taste of the insipidity of truth. A play, which imitated only the common

occurrences of the world, would, upon the admirers of *Palmerin* and *Guy of Warwick*, have made little impression; he that wrote for such an audience was under the necessity of looking round for strange events and fabulous transactions, and that incredibility, by which maturer knowledge is offended, was the chief recommendation of writings, to unskilful curiosity.

Our author's plots are generally borrowed from novels; and it is reasonable to suppose, that he chose the most popular, such as were read by many, and related by more; for his audience could not have followed him through the intricacies of the drama, had they not held the thread of the story in their hands.

The stories, which we now find only in remoter authors, were in his time accessible and familiar. The fable of *As you like it*, which is supposed to be copied from Chaucer's *Gamelyn*, was a little pamphlet of those times; and old Mr. Cibber remembered the tale of *Hamlet* in plain English prose, which the criticks have now to seek in *Saxo Grammaticus*.

His English histories he took from English chronicles and English ballads; and as the ancient writers were made known to his countrymen by versions, they supplied him with new subjects; he dilated some of Plutarch's lives into plays, when they had been translated by North.

His plots, whether historical or fabulous, are always crowded with incidents, by which the attention of a rude people was more easily caught than by sentiment or argumentation; and such is the power of the marvellous, even over those who despise it, that every man finds his mind more strongly seized by the tragedies of Shakspeare than of

any other writer; others please us by particular speeches, but he always makes us anxious for the event, and has perhaps excelled all but Homer in securing the first purpose of a writer, by exciting restless and unquenchable curiosity, and compelling him that reads his work to read it through.

The shows and bustle with which his plays abound have the same original. As knowledge advances, pleasure passes from the eye to the ear, but returns, as it declines, from the ear to the eye. Those to whom our author's labours were exhibited had more skill in pomps or processions than in poetical language, and perhaps wanted some visible and discriminated events, as comments on the dialogue. He knew how he should most please; and whether his practice is more agreeable to nature, or whether his example has prejudiced the nation, we still find that on our stage something must be done as well as said, and inactive declamation is very coldly heard, however musical or elegant, passionate or sublime.

Voltaire expresses his wonder, that our author's extravagancies are endured by a nation, which has seen the tragedy of *Cato*. Let him be answered, that Addison speaks the language of poets, and Shakspeare, of men. We find in *Cato* innumerable beauties which enamour us of its author, but we see nothing that acquaints us with human sentiments or human actions; we place it with the fairest and the noblest progeny which judgment propagates by conjunction with learning; but *Othello* is the vigorous and vivacious offspring of observation impregnated by genius. *Cato* affords a splendid exhibition of artificial and fictitious manners, and delivers just and noble sentiments, in diction easy, elevated, and harmonious, but its

hopes and fears communicate no vibration to the heart; the composition refers us only to the writer; we pronounce the name of *Cato*, but we think on *Addison*.⁵

The work of a correct and regular writer is a garden accurately formed and diligently planted, varied with shades, and scented with flowers: the composition of Shakspeare is a forest, in which oaks extend their branches, and pines tower in the air, interspersed sometimes with weeds and brambles, and sometimes giving shelter to myrtles and to roses; filling the eye with awful pomp, and gratifying the mind with endless diversity. Other poets display cabinets of precious rarities, minutely finished, wrought into shape, and polished into brightness. Shakspeare opens a mine which contains gold and diamonds in unexhaustible plenty, though clouded by incrustations, debased by impurities, and mingled with a mass of meaner minerals.

It has been much disputed, whether Shakspeare owed his excellence to his own native force, or whether he had the common helps of scholastick education, the precepts of critical science, and the examples of ancient authors.

There has always prevailed a tradition, that Shakspeare wanted learning, that he had no regular education, nor much skill in the dead languages. Jonson, his friend, affirms, that *he had small Latin, and less Greek*; who, besides that he had no imaginable temptation to falsehood, wrote at a time when the character and acquisitions of Shakspeare were known to multitudes. His evidence ought

⁵ See Mr. Twining's commentary on Aristotle, note 51.

therefore to decide the controversy, unless some testimony of equal force could be opposed.

Some have imagined, that they have discovered deep learning in imitation of old writers; but the examples which I have known urged, were drawn from books translated in his time; or were such easy coincidences of thought, as will happen to all who consider the same subjects; or such remarks on life or axioms of morality as float in conversation, and are transmitted through the world in proverbial sentences.

I have found it remarked, that, in this important sentence, *Go before, I'll follow*, we read a translation of, *I prae sequar*. I have been told, that when Caliban, after a pleasing dream, says, *I cried to sleep again*, the author imitates Anacreon, who had, like every other man, the same wish on the same occasion.

There are a few passages which may pass for imitations, but so few, that the exception only confirms the rule; he obtained them from accidental quotations, or by oral communication, and as he used what he had, would have used more if he had obtained it.

The *Comedy of Errors* is confessedly taken from the *Menæchmi* of *Plautus*; from the only play of *Plautus* which was then in English. What can be more probable, than that he who copied that, would have copied more; but that those which were not translated were inaccessible?

Whether he knew the modern languages is uncertain. That his plays have some French scenes proves but little; he might easily procure them to be written, and probably, even though he had known the language in the common degree, he could not have written it without assistance. In the

story of *Romeo and Juliet* he is observed to have followed the English translation, where it deviates from the Italian; but this on the other part proves nothing against his knowledge of the original. He was to copy, not what he knew himself, but what was known to his audience.

It is most likely that he had learned Latin sufficiently to make him acquainted with construction, but that he never advanced to an easy perusal of the Roman authors. Concerning his skill in modern languages, I can find no sufficient ground of determination; but as no imitations of French or Italian authors have been discovered, though the Italian poetry was then in high esteem, I am inclined to believe, that he read little more than English, and chose for his fables only such tales as he found translated.

That much knowledge is scattered over his works is very justly observed by Pope, but it is often such knowledge as books did not supply. He that will understand Shakspeare, must not be content to study him in the closet, he must look for his meaning sometimes among the sports of the field, and sometimes among the manufactures of the shop.

There is, however, proof enough that he was a very diligent reader, nor was our language then so indigent of books, but that he might very liberally indulge his curiosity without excursion into foreign literature. Many of the Roman authors were translated, and some of the Greek; the Reformation had filled the kingdom with theological learning; most of the topicks of human disquisition had found English writers; and poetry had been cultivated, not only with diligence, but success. This was a stock of knowledge sufficient for a

mind so capable of appropriating and improving it.

But the greater part of his excellence was the product of his own genius. He found the English stage in a state of the utmost rudeness; no essays either in tragedy or comedy had appeared, from which it could be discovered to what degree of delight either one or other might be carried. Neither character nor dialogue were yet understood. Shakspeare may be truly said to have introduced them both amongst us, and in some of his happier scenes to have carried them both to the utmost height.

By what gradations of improvement he proceeded, is not easily known; for the chronology of his works is yet unsettled. Rowe is of opinion, that *perhaps we are not to look for his beginning, like those of other writers, in his least perfect works; art had so little, and nature so large a share in what he did, that for aught I know, says he, the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, were the best.* But the power of nature is only the power of using to any certain purpose the materials which diligence procures, or opportunity supplies. Nature gives no man knowledge, and when images are collected by study and experience, can only assist in combining or applying them. Shakspeare, however favoured by nature, could impart only what he had learned; and as he must increase his ideas, like other mortals, by gradual acquisition, he, like them, grew wiser as he grew older, could display life better, as he knew it more, and instruct with more efficacy, as he was himself more amply instructed.

There is a vigilance of observation and accuracy of distinction which books and precepts cannot

confer; from this almost all original and native excellence proceeds. Shakspeare must have looked upon mankind with perspicacity, in the highest degree curious and attentive. Other writers borrow their characters from preceding writers, and diversify them only by the accidental appendages of present manners; the dress is a little varied, but the body is the same. Our author had both matter and form to provide; for, except the characters of Chaucer, to whom I think he is not much indebted, there were no writers in English, and perhaps not many in other modern languages, which showed life in its native colours.

The contest about the original benevolence or malignity of man had not yet commenced. Speculation had not yet attempted to analyse the mind, to trace the passions to their sources, to unfold the seminal principles of vice and virtue, or sound the depths of the heart for the motives of action. All those enquiries, which from that time that human nature became the fashionable study, have been made sometimes with nice discernment, but often with idle subtilty, were yet unattempted. The tales, with which the infancy of learning was satisfied, exhibited only the superficial appearances of action, related the events, but omitted the causes, and were formed for such as delighted in wonders rather than in truth. Mankind was not then to be studied in the closet; he that would know the world, was under the necessity of gleaning his own remarks, by mingling as he could in its business and amusements.

Boyle congratulated himself upon his high birth, because it favoured his curiosity, by facilitating his access. Shakspeare had no such advantage; he came to London a needy adventurer, and lived for a time by very mean employments. Many works

of genius and learning have been performed in states of life that appear very little favourable to thought or to enquiry; so many, that he who considers them is inclined to think that he sees enterprize and perseverance predominating over all external agency, and bidding help and hindrance vanish before them. The genius of Shakspeare was not to be depressed by the weight of poverty, nor limited by the narrow conversation to which men in want are inevitably condemned; the incumbrances of his fortune were shaken from his mind, *as dew-drops from a lion's mane.*

Though he had so many difficulties to encounter, and so little assistance to surmount them, he has been able to obtain an exact knowledge of many modes of life, and many casts of native dispositions; to vary them with great multiplicity; to mark them by nice distinctions; and to show them in full view by proper combinations. In this part of his performances he had none to imitate, but has himself been imitated by all succeeding writers; and it may be doubted, whether from all his successors more maxims of theoretical knowledge, or more rules of practical prudence, can be collected, than he alone has given to his country.

Nor was his attention confined to the actions of men; he was an exact surveyor of the inanimate world; his descriptions have always some peculiarities, gathered by contemplating things as they really exist. It may be observed, that the oldest poets of many nations preserve their reputation, and that the following generations of wit, after a short celebrity, sink into oblivion. The first, whoever they be, must take their sentiments and descriptions immediately from knowledge; the resemblance is therefore just, their descriptions are verified by every eye, and their sentiments ac-

knowledged by every breast. Those whom their fame invites to the same studies, copy partly them, and partly nature, till the books of one age gain such authority, as to stand in the place of nature to another, and imitation, always deviating a little, becomes at last capricious and casual. Shakspeare, whether life or nature be his subject, shows plainly, that he has seen with his own eyes; he gives the image which he receives, not weakened or distorted by the intervention of any other mind; the ignorant feel his representations to be just, and the learned see that they are complete.

Perhaps it would not be easy to find any author, except Homer, who invented so much as Shakspeare, who so much advanced the studies which he cultivated, or effused so much novelty upon his age or country. The form, the character, the language, and the shows of the English drama are his. *He seems, says Dennis, to have been the very original of our English tragical harmony, that is, the harmony of blank verse, diversified often by dissyllable and trissyllable terminations. For the diversity distinguishes it from heroick harmony, and by bringing it nearer to common use makes it more proper to gain attention, and more fit for action and dialogue. Such verse we make when we are writing prose; we make such verse in common conversation.*⁶

⁶ Thus, also, Dryden, in the Epistle Dedicatory to his *Rival Ladies*: "Shakespear (who with some errors not to be avoided in that age, had, undoubtedly, a larger soul of poesie than ever any of our nation) was the first, who, to shun the pains of continual rhyiming, invented that kind of writing which we call blank verse, but the French more properly, *prose mesurée*; into which the English tongue so naturally slides, that in writing prose 'tis hardly to be avoided." STEEVENS.

I know not whether this praise is rigorously just. The dissyllable termination, which the critick rightly appropriates to the drama, is to be found, though, I think, not in *Gorboduc*, which is confessedly before our author; yet in *Hieronymo*,⁷ of which the date is not certain, but which there is reason to believe at least as old as his earliest plays. This however is certain, that he is the first who taught either tragedy or comedy to please, there being no theatrical piece of any older writer, of which the name is known, except to antiquaries and collectors of books, which are sought because they are scarce, and would not have been scarce, had they been much esteemed.

To him we must ascribe the praise, unless Spenser may divide it with him, of having first discovered to how much smoothness and harmony the English language could be softened. He has speeches, perhaps sometimes scenes, which have all the delicacy of Rowe, without his effeminacy. He endeavours indeed commonly to strike by the force and vigour of his dialogue, but he never executes his purpose better, than when he tries to sooth by softness.

Yet it must be at last confessed, that as we owe every thing to him, he owes something to us; that, if much of his praise is paid by perception and judgment, much is likewise given by custom and veneration. We fix our eyes upon his graces, and turn them from his deformities, and endure in him what we should in another loath or despise. If we endured without praising, respect for the father of

⁷ It appears from the Induction of Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, to have been acted before the year 1590. See also Vol. X. p. 344, n. 3. STEEVENS.

our drama might excuse us; but I have seen, in the book of some modern critick, a collection of anomalies, which show that he has corrupted language by every mode of depravation, but which his admirer has accumulated as a monument of honour.

He has scenes of undoubted and perpetual excellence, but perhaps not one play, which, if it were now exhibited as the work of a contemporary writer, would be heard to the conclusion. I am indeed far from thinking, that his works were wrought to his own ideas of perfection; when they were such as would satisfy the audience, they satisfied the writer. It is seldom that authors, though more studious of fame than Shakspeare, rise much above the standard of their own age; to add a little to what is best will always be sufficient for present praise, and those who find themselves exalted into fame, are willing to credit their encomiasts, and to spare the labour of contending with themselves.

It does not appear, that Shakspeare thought his works worthy of posterity, that he levied any ideal tribute upon future times, or had any further prospect, than of present popularity and present profit. When his plays had been acted, his hope was at an end; he solicited no addition of honour from the reader. He therefore made no scruple to repeat the same jests in many dialogues, or to entangle different plots by the same knot of perplexity, which may be at least forgiven him, by those who recollect, that of Congreve's four comedies, two are concluded by a marriage in a mask, by a deception, which perhaps never happened, and which, whether likely or not, he did not invent.

So careless was this great poet of future fame,

that, though he retired to ease and plenty, while he was yet little *declined into the vale of years*, before he could be disgusted with fatigue, or disabled by infirmity, he made no collection of his works, nor desired to rescue those that had been already published from the depravations that obscured them, or secure to the rest a better destiny, by giving them to the world in their genuine state.^s

Of the plays which bear the name of Shakspeare in the late editions, the greater part were not published till about seven years after his death, and the few which appeared in his life are apparently thrust into the world without the care of the author, and therefore probably without his knowledge.

Of all the publishers, clandestine or professed, the negligence and unskilfulness has by the late revisers been sufficiently shown. The faults of all are indeed numerous and gross, and have not only corrupted many passages perhaps beyond recovery, but have brought others into suspicion, which are only obscured by obsolete phraseology, or by the writer's unskilfulness and affectation. To alter is more easy than to explain, and temerity is a more common quality than diligence. Those who saw that they must employ conjecture to a certain degree, were willing to indulge it a little further. Had the author published his own works, we should have sat quietly down to disentangle his intricacies, and clear his obscurities; but now we tear what we cannot loose, and eject what we happen not to understand.

The faults are more than could have happened

^s What Montaigne has said of his own works may almost be applied to those of Shakspeare, who "n'avoit point d'autre sergent de bande à ranger ses pieces, que la fortune." STEEVENS.

without the concurrence of many causes. The style of Shakspeare was in itself ungrammatical, perplexed, and obscure; his works were transcribed for the players by those who may be supposed to have seldom understood them; they were transmitted by copiers equally unskilful, who still multiplied errors; they were perhaps sometimes mutilated by the actors, for the sake of shortening the speeches; and were at last printed without correction of the press.⁹

In this state they remained, not as Dr. Warburton supposes, because they were unregarded, but because the editor's art was not yet applied to modern languages, and our ancestors were accustomed to so much negligence of English printers, that they could very patiently endure it. At last an edition was undertaken by Rowe; not because a poet was to be published by a poet, for Rowe seems to have thought very little on correction or explanation, but that our author's works might appear like those of his fraternity, with the appendages of a life and

⁹ Much deserved censure has been thrown out on the carelessness of our ancient printers, as well as on the wretched transcripts they obtained from contemporary theatres. Yet I cannot help observing that, even at this instant, should any one undertake to publish a play of Shakspeare from pages of no greater fidelity than such as are issued out for the use of performers, the press would teem with as interpolated and inextricable nonsense as it produced above a century ago. Mr. Colman (who cannot be suspected of ignorance or misrepresentation) in his preface to the last edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, very forcibly styles the prompter's books, "the most inaccurate and barbarous of all manuscripts." And well may they deserve that character; for verse (as I am informed) still continues to be transcribed as prose by a set of mercenaries, who in general have neither the advantage of literature or understanding. *Foliis tantum ne carmina manda, ne turbata volent ludibria.* was the request of Virgil's Hero to the Sybil, and should also be the supplication of every dramattick poet to the agents of a prompter. STEEVENS.

commendatory preface. Rowe has been clamorously blamed for not performing what he did not undertake, and it is time that justice be done him, by confessing, that though he seems to have had no thought of corruption beyond the printer's errors, yet he has made many emendations, if they were not made before, which his successors have received without acknowledgment, and which, if they had produced them, would have filled pages and pages with censures of the stupidity by which the faults were committed, with displays of the absurdities which they involved, with ostentatious expositions of the new reading, and self-congratulations on the happiness of discovering it.

As of the other editors I have preserved the prefaces, I have likewise borrowed the author's life from Rowe, though not written with much elegance or spirit; it relates, however, what is now to be known, and therefore deserves to pass through all succeeding publications.

The nation had been for many years content enough with Mr. Rowe's performance, when Mr. Pope made them acquainted with the true state of Shakspeare's text, showed that it was extremely corrupt, and gave reason to hope that there were means of reforming it. He collated the old copies, which none had thought to examine before, and restored many lines to their integrity; but, by a very compendious criticism, he rejected whatever he disliked, and thought more of amputation than of cure.

I know not why he is commended by Dr. Warburton for distinguishing the genuine from the spurious plays. In this choice he exerted no judgment of his own; the plays which he received, were given to Hemings and Condel, the first edi-

tors; and those which he rejected, though, according to the licentiousness of the press in those times, they were printed during Shakspeare's life, with his name, had been omitted by his friends, and were never added to his works before the edition of 1664, from which they were copied by the latter printers.

This was a work which Pope seems to have thought unworthy of his abilities, being not able to suppress his contempt of *the dull duty of an editor*. He understood but half his undertaking. The duty of a collator is indeed dull, yet, like other tedious tasks is very necessary; but an emendatory critick would ill discharge his duty, without qualities very different from dullness. In perusing a corrupted piece, he must have before him all possibilities of meaning, with all possibilities of expression. Such must be his comprehension of thought, and such his copiousness of language. Out of many readings possible, he must be able to select that which best suits with the state, opinions, and modes of language prevailing in every age, and with his author's particular cast of thought, and turn of expression. Such must be his knowledge, and such his taste. Conjectural criticism demands more than humanity possesses, and he that exercises it with most praise, has very frequent need of indulgence. Let us now be told no more of the dull duty of an editor.

Confidence is the common consequence of success. They whose excellence of any kind has been loudly celebrated, are ready to conclude, that their powers are universal. Pope's edition fell below his own expectations, and he was so much offended, when he was found to have left any thing for others

to do, that he passed the latter part of his life in a state of hostility with verbal criticism.¹

I have retained all his notes, that no fragment of so great a writer may be lost; his preface, valuable alike for elegance of composition and justness of remark, and containing a general criticism on his author, so extensive that little can be added, and so exact, that little can be disputed, every editor has an interest to suppress, but that every reader would demand its insertion.

Pope was succeeded by Theobald, a man of narrow comprehension, and small acquisitions, with no native and intrinsic splendor of genius, with little of the artificial light of learning, but zealous for minute accuracy, and not negligent in pursuing it. He collated the ancient copies, and rectified many errors. A man so anxiously scrupulous might have been expected to do more, but what little he did was commonly right.

In his reports of copies and editions he is not to be trusted without examination. He speaks sometimes indefinitely of copies, when he has only one. In his enumeration of editions, he mentions the two first folios as of high, and the third folio

¹ The following compliment from Broome (says Dr. Joseph Warton) Pope could not take much pleasure in reading; for he could not value himself on his edition of Shakspeare:

- “ If aught on earth, when once this breath is fled,
- “ With human transport touch the mighty dead,
- “ Shakspeare, rejoice! his hand thy page refines;
- “ Now ev'ry scene with native brightness shines;
- “ Just to thy fame, he gives thy genuine thought;
- “ So Tully publish'd what Lucretius wrote;
- “ Prun'd by his care, thy laurels loftier grow,
- “ And bloom afresh on thy immortal brow.”

Broome's *Verses to Mr. Pope*. STEEVENS.

as of middle authority; but the truth is, that the first is equivalent to all others, and that the rest only deviate from it by the printer's negligence. Whoever has any of the folios has all, excepting those diversities which mere reiteration of editions will produce. I collated them all at the beginning, but afterwards used only the first.

Of his notes I have generally retained those which he retained himself in his second edition, except when they were confuted by subsequent annotators, or were too minute to merit preservation. I have sometimes adopted his restoration of a comma, without inserting the panegyrick in which he celebrated himself for his achievement. The exuberant excrescence of his diction I have often lopped, his triumphant exultations over Pope and Rowe I have sometimes suppressed, and his contemptible ostentation I have frequently concealed; but I have in some places shown him, as he would have shown himself, for the reader's diversion, that the inflated emptiness of some notes may justify or excuse the contraction of the rest.

Theobald, thus weak and ignorant, thus mean and faithless, thus petulant and ostentatious, by the good luck of having Pope for his enemy, has escaped, and escaped alone, with reputation, from this undertaking. So willingly does the world support those who solicit favour, against those who command reverence; and so easily is he praised, whom no man can envy.

Our author fell then into the hands of Sir Thomas Hanmer, the Oxford editor, a man, in my opinion, eminently qualified by nature for such studies. He had, what is the first requisite to emendatory criticism, that intuition by which the

poet's intention is immediately discovered, and that dexterity of intellect which despatches its work by the easiest means. He had undoubtedly read much; his acquaintance with customs, opinions, and traditions, seems to have been large; and he is often learned without show. He seldom passes what he does not understand, without an attempt to find or to make a meaning, and sometimes hastily makes what a little more attention would have found. He is solicitous to reduce to grammar, what he could not be sure that his author intended to be grammatical. Shakspeare regarded more the series of ideas, than of words; and his language, not being designed for the reader's desk, was all that he desired it to be, if it conveyed his meaning to the audience.

Hanmer's care of the metre has been too violently censured. He found the measure reformed in so many passages, by the silent labours of some editors, with the silent acquiescence of the rest, that he thought himself allowed to extend a little further the licence, which had already been carried so far without reprehension; and of his corrections in general, it must be confessed, that they are often just, and made commonly with the least possible violation of the text.

But, by inserting his emendations, whether invented or borrowed, into the page, without any notice of varying copies, he has appropriated the labour of his predecessors, and made his own edition of little authority. His confidence, indeed, both in himself and others, was too great; he supposes all to be right that was done by Pope and Theobald; he seems not to suspect a critick of fallibility, and it was but reasonable that he should claim what he so liberally granted.

As he never writes without careful enquiry and diligent consideration, I have received all his notes, and believe that every reader will wish for more.

Of the last editor it is more difficult to speak. Respect is due to high place, tenderness to living reputation, and veneration to genius and learning; but he cannot be justly offended at that liberty of which he has himself so frequently given an example, nor very solicitous what is thought of notes, which he ought never to have considered as part of his serious employments, and which, I suppose, since the ardour of composition is remitted, he no longer numbers among his happy effusions.

The original and predominant error of his commentary, is acquiescence in his first thoughts; that precipitation which is produced by consciousness of quick discernment; and that confidence which presumes to do, by surveying the surface, what labour only can perform, by penetrating the bottom. His notes exhibit sometimes perverse interpretations, and sometimes improbable conjectures; he at one time gives the author more profundity of meaning than the sentence admits, and at another discovers absurdities, where the sense is plain to every other reader. But his emendations are likewise often happy and just; and his interpretation of obscure passages learned and sagacious.

Of his notes, I have commonly rejected those, against which the general voice of the publick has exclaimed, or which their own incongruity immediately condemns, and which, I suppose the author himself would desire to be forgotten. Of the rest, to part I have given the highest approbation, by inserting the offered reading in the text; part I

have left to the judgment of the reader, as doubtful, though specious; and part I have censured without reserve, but I am sure without bitterness of malice, and, I hope, without wantonness of insult.

It is no pleasure to me, in revising my volumes, to observe how much paper is wasted in confutation. Whoever considers the revolutions of learning, and the various questions of greater or less importance, upon which wit and reason have exercised their powers, must lament the unsuccessfulness of enquiry, and the slow advances of truth, when he reflects, that great part of the labour of every writer is only the destruction of those that went before him. The first care of the builder of a new system is to demolish the fabricks which are standing. The chief desire of him that comments an author, is to show how much other commentators have corrupted and obscured him. The opinions prevalent in one age, as truths above the reach of controversy, are confuted and rejected in another, and rise again to reception in remoter times. Thus the human mind is kept in motion without progress. Thus sometimes truth and error, and sometimes contrarities of error, take each other's place by reciprocal invasion. The tide of seeming knowledge which is poured over one generation, retires and leaves another naked and barren; the sudden meteors of intelligence, which for a while appear to shoot their beams into the regions of obscurity, on a sudden withdraw their lustre, and leave mortals again to grope their way.

These elevations and depressions of renown, and the contradictions to which all improvers of knowledge must for ever be exposed, since they are not

escaped by the highest and brightest of mankind, may surely be endured with patience by criticks and annotators, who can rank themselves but as the satellites of their authors. How canst thou beg for life, says Homer's hero to his captive, when thou knowest that thou art now to suffer only what must another day be suffered by Achilles?

Dr. Warburton had a name sufficient to confer celebrity on those who could exalt themselves into antagonists, and his notes have raised a clamour too loud to be distinct. His chief assailants are the authors of *The Canons of Criticism*, and of *The Revision of Shakspeare's Text*; of whom one ridicules his errors with airy petulance, suitable enough to the levity of the controversy; the other attacks them with gloomy malignity, as if he were dragging to justice an assassin or incendiary. The one stings² like a fly, sucks a little blood, takes a gay flutter, and returns for more; the other bites like a viper, and would be glad to leave inflammations and gangrene behind him. When I think on one, with his confederates, I remember the danger of Coriolanus, who was afraid that *girls with spits, and boys with stones, should slay him in puny battle*; when the other crosses my imagination, I remember the prodigy in *Macbeth*:

“ A falcon tow'ring in his pride of place,
“ Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.”

Let me however do them justice. One is a wit, and one a scholar.³ They have both shown acute-

² See Boswell's *Life of Dr. Johnson*, Vol. I. p. 227, 3d edit.
REED.

³ It is extraordinary that this gentleman should attempt so

ness sufficient in the discovery of faults, and have both advanced some probable interpretations of obscure passages; but when they aspire to conjecture and emendation, it appears how falsely we all estimate our own abilities, and the little which they have been able to perform might have taught them more candour to the endeavours of others.

Before Dr. Warburton's edition, *Critical Observations on Shakspeare* had been published by Mr. Upton,⁴ a man skilled in languages, and acquainted with books, but who seems to have had no great vigour of genius or nicety of taste. Many of his explanations are curious and useful, but he likewise, though he professed to oppose the licentious confidence of editors, and adhere to the old copies, is unable to restrain the rage of emendation, though his ardour is ill seconded by his skill. Every cold empirick, when his heart expanded by a successful experiment, swells into a theorist, and the laborious collator at some unlucky moment frolicks in conjecture.

Critical, historical, and explanatory Notes have been likewise published upon Shakspeare by Dr. Grey, whose diligent perusal of the old English writers has enabled him to make some useful observations. What he undertook he has well enough performed, but as he neither attempts judicial nor emendatory criticism, he employs rather his memory

voluminous a work, as *the Revisal of Shakspeare's text*, when he tells us in his preface, "he was not so fortunate as to be furnished with either of the folio editions, much less any of the ancient quartos: and even Sir Thomas Hanmer's performance was known to him only by Dr. Warburton's representation."

FARMER.

⁴ Republished by him in 1748, after Dr. Warburton's edition, with alterations, &c. STEEVENS.

than his sagacity. It were to be wished that all would endeavour to imitate his modesty, who have not been able to surpass his knowledge.

I can say with great sincerity of all my predecessors, what I hope will hereafter be said of me, that not one has left Shakspeare without improvement, nor is there one to whom I have not been indebted for assistance and information. Whatever I have taken from them, it was my intention to refer to its original author, and it is certain, that what I have not given to another, I believed when I wrote it to be my own. In some perhaps I have been anticipated; but if I am ever found to encroach upon the remarks of any other commentator, I am willing that the honour, be it more or less, should be transferred to the first claimant, for his right, and his alone, stands above dispute; the second can prove his pretensions only to himself, nor can himself always distinguish invention, with sufficient certainty, from recollection.

They have all been treated by me with candour, which they have not been careful of observing to one another. It is not easy to discover from what cause the acrimony of a scholiast can naturally proceed. The subjects to be discussed by him are of very small importance; they involve neither property nor liberty; nor favour the interest of sect or party. The various readings of copies, and different interpretations of a passage, seem to be questions that might exercise the wit, without engaging the passions. But whether it be, that *small things make mean men proud*, and vanity catches small occasions; or that all contrariety of opinion, even in those that can defend it no longer, makes proud men angry; there is often found in commentaries a spontaneous strain of invective and

contempt, more eager and venomous than is vented by the most furious controvertist in politicks against those whom he is hired to defame.

Perhaps the lightness of the matter may conduce to the vehemence of the agency; when the truth to be investigated is so near to inexistence, as to escape attention, its bulk is to be enlarged by rage and exclamation: that to which all would be indifferent in its original state, may attract notice when the fate of a name is appended to it. A commentator has indeed great temptations to supply by turbulence what he wants of dignity, to beat his little gold to a spacious surface, to work that to foam which no art or diligence can exalt to spirit.

The notes which I have borrowed or written are either illustrative, by which difficulties are explained; or judicial, by which faults and beauties are remarked; or emendatory, by which depravations are corrected.

The explanations transcribed from others, if I do not subjoin any other interpretation, I suppose commonly to be right, at least I intend by acquiescence to confess, that I have nothing better to propose.

After the labours of all the editors, I found many passages which appeared to me likely to obstruct the greater number of readers, and thought it my duty to facilitate their passage. It is impossible for an expositor not to write too little for some, and too much for others. He can only judge what is necessary by his own experience; and how long soever he may deliberate, will at last explain many lines which the learned will think impossible to be mistaken, and omit many for which the ignorant will want his help. These are censures merely relative, and must be quietly endured. I have

endeavoured to be neither superfluously copious, nor scrupulously reserved, and hope that I have made my author's meaning accessible to many, who before were frightened from perusing him, and contributed something to the publick, by diffusing innocent and rational pleasure.

The complete explanation of an author not systematick and consequential, but desultory and vagrant, abounding in casual allusions and light hints, is not to be expected from any single scholiast. All personal reflections, when names are suppressed, must be in a few years irrecoverably obliterated; and customs, too minute to attract the notice of law, yet such as modes of dress, formalities of conversation, rules of visits, disposition of furniture, and practices of ceremony, which naturally find places in familiar dialogue, are so fugitive and unsubstantial, that they are not easily retained or recovered. What can be known will be collected by chance, from the recesses of obscure and obsolete papers, perused commonly with some other view. Of this knowledge every man has some, and none has much; but when an author has engaged the publick attention, those who can add any thing to his illustration, communicate their discoveries, and time produces what had eluded diligence.

To time I have been obliged to resign many passages, which, though I did not understand them, will perhaps hereafter be explained, having, I hope, illustrated some, which others have neglected or mistaken, sometimes by short remarks, or marginal directions, such as every editor has added at his will, and often by comments more laborious than the matter will seem to deserve; but that which is most difficult is not always most important, and to

an editor nothing is a trifle by which his author is obscured.

The poetical beauties or defects I have not been very diligent to observe. Some plays have more, and some fewer judicial observations, not in proportion to their difference of merit, but because I gave this part of my design to chance and to caprice. The reader, I believe, is seldom pleased to find his opinion anticipated; it is natural to delight more in what we find or make, than in what we receive. Judgment, like other faculties, is improved by practice, and its advancement is hindered by submission to dictatorial decisions, as the memory grows torpid by the use of a table-book. Some initiation is however necessary; of all skill, part is infused by precept, and part is obtained by habit; I have therefore shown so much as may enable the candidate of criticism to discover the rest.

To the end of most plays I have added short strictures, containing a general censure of faults, or praise of excellence; in which I know not how much I have concurred with the current opinion; but I have not, by any affectation of singularity, deviated from it. Nothing is minutely and particularly examined, and therefore it is to be supposed, that in the plays which are condemned there is much to be praised, and in these which are praised much to be condemned.

The part of criticism in which the whole succession of editors has laboured with the greatest diligence, which has occasioned the most arrogant ostentation, and excited the keenest acrimony, is the emendation of corrupted passages, to which the publick attention having been first drawn by the violence of the contention between Pope and Theobald, has been continued by the persecution,

which, with a kind of conspiracy, has been since raised against all the publishers of Shakspeare.

That many passages have passed in a state of depravation through all the editions is indubitably certain; of these, the restoration is only to be attempted by collation of copies, or sagacity of conjecture. The collator's province is safe and easy, the conjecturer's perilous and difficult. Yet as the greater part of the plays are extant only in one copy, the peril must not be avoided, nor the difficulty refused.

Of the readings which this emulation of amendment has hitherto produced, some from the labours of every publisher I have advanced into the text; those are to be considered as in my opinion sufficiently supported; some I have rejected without mention, as evidently erroneous; some I have left in the notes without censure or approbation, as resting in equipoise between objection and defence; and some, which seemed specious but not right, I have inserted with a subsequent animadversion.

Having classed the observations of others, I was at last to try what I could substitute for their mistakes, and how I could supply their omissions. I collated such copies as I could procure, and wished for more, but have not found the collectors of these rarities very communicative. Of the editions which chance or kindness put into my hands I have given an enumeration, that I may not be blamed for neglecting what I had not the power to do.

By examining the old copies, I soon found that the later publishers, with all their boasts of diligence, suffered many passages to stand unauthorized, and contented themselves with Rowe's

regulation of the text, even where they knew it to be arbitrary, and with a little consideration might have found it to be wrong. Some of these alterations are only the ejection of a word for one that appeared to him more elegant or more intelligible. These corruptions I have often silently rectified; for the history of our language, and the true force of our words, can only be preserved, by keeping the text of authors free from adulteration. Others, and those very frequent, smoothed the cadence, or regulated the measure; on these I have not exercised the same rigour; if only a word was transposed, or a particle inserted or omitted, I have sometimes suffered the line to stand; for the inconstancy of the copies is such, as that some liberties may be easily permitted. But this practice I have not suffered to proceed far, having restored the primitive diction wherever it could for any reason be preferred.

The emendations, which comparison of copies supplied, I have inserted in the text; sometimes, where the improvement was slight, without notice, and sometimes with an account of the reasons of the change.

Conjecture, though it be sometimes unavoidable, I have not wantonly nor licentiously indulged. It has been my settled principle, that the reading of the ancient books is probably true, and therefore is not to be disturbed for the sake of elegance, perspicuity, or mere improvement of the sense. For though much credit is not due to the fidelity, nor any to the judgment of the first publishers, yet they who had the copy before their eyes were more likely to read it right, than we who read it only by imagination. But it is evident that they have often made strange mistakes by ignorance or

negligence, and that therefore something may be properly attempted by criticism, keeping the middle way between presumption and timidity.

Such criticism I have attempted to practise, and where any passage appeared inextricably perplexed, have endeavoured to discover how it may be recalled to sense, with least violence. But my first labour is, always to turn the old text on every side, and try if there be any interstice, through which light can find its way; nor would Huetius himself condemn me, as refusing the trouble of research, for the ambition of alteration. In this modest industry, I have not been unsuccessful. I have rescued many lines from the violations of temerity, and secured many scenes from the inroads of correction. I have adopted the Roman sentiment, that it is more honourable to save a citizen, than to kill an enemy, and have been more careful to protect than to attack.

I have preserved the common distribution of the plays into acts, though I believe it to be in almost all the plays void of authority. Some of those which are divided in the later editions have no division in the first folio, and some that are divided in the folio have no division in the preceding copies. The settled mode of the theatre requires four intervals in the play, but few, if any, of our author's compositions can be properly distributed in that manner. An act is so much of the drama as passes without intervention of time, or change of place. A pause makes a new act. In every real, and therefore in every imitative action, the intervals may be more or fewer, the restriction of five acts being accidental and arbitrary. This Shakspeare knew, and this he practised; his plays were written, and at first printed in one unbroken

continuity, and ought now to be exhibited with short pauses, interposed as often as the scene is changed, or any considerable time is required to pass. This method would at once quell a thousand absurdities.

In restoring the author's works to their integrity, I have considered the punctuation as wholly in my power; for what could be their care of colons and commas, who corrupted words and sentences? Whatever could be done by adjusting points, is therefore silently performed, in some plays, with much diligence, in others with less; it is hard to keep a busy eye steadily fixed upon evanescent atoms, or a discursive mind upon evanescent truth.

The same liberty has been taken with a few particles, or other words of slight effect. I have sometimes inserted or omitted them without notice. I have done that sometimes, which the other editors have done always, and which indeed the state of the text may sufficiently justify.

The greater part of readers, instead of blaming us for passing trifles, will wonder that on mere trifles so much labour is expended, with such importance of debate, and such solemnity of diction. To these I answer with confidence, that they are judging of an art which they do not understand; yet cannot much reproach them with their ignorance, nor promise that they would become in general, by learning criticism, more useful, happier, or wiser.

As I practised conjecture more, I learned to trust it less; and after I had printed a few plays, resolved to insert none of my own readings in the text. Upon this caution I now congratulate myself, for every day increases my doubt of my emendations.

Since I have confined my imagination to the margin, it must not be considered as very reprehensible, if I have suffered it to play some freaks in its own dominion. There is no danger in conjecture, if it be proposed as conjecture; and while the text remains uninjured, those changes may be safely offered, which are not considered even by him that offers them as necessary or safe.

If my readings are of little value, they have not been ostentatiously displayed or importunately obtruded. I could have written longer notes, for the art of writing notes is not of difficult attainment. The work is performed, first by railing at the stupidity, negligence, ignorance, and asinine tastelessness of the former editors, showing, from all that goes before and all that follows, the inelegance and absurdity of the old reading; then by proposing something, which to superficial readers would seem specious, but which the editor rejects with indignation; then by producing the true reading, with a long paraphrase, and concluding with loud acclamations on the discovery, and a sober wish for the advancement and prosperity of genuine criticism.

All this may be done, and perhaps done sometimes without impropriety. But I have always suspected that the reading is right, which requires many words to prove it wrong; and the emendation wrong, that cannot without so much labour appear to be right. The justness of a happy restoration strikes at once, and the moral precept may be well applied to criticism, *quod dubitas ne feceris*.

To dread the shore which he sees spread with wrecks, is natural to the sailor. I had before my eye, so many critical adventures ended in mis-

carriage, that caution was forced upon me. I encountered in every page wit struggling with its own sophistry, and learning confused by the multiplicity of its views. I was forced to censure those whom I admired, and could not but reflect, while I was dispossessing their emendations, how soon the same fate might happen to my own, and how many of the readings which I have corrected may be by some other editor defended and established.

“ Criticks I saw, that other’s names efface,
 “ And fix their own, with labour, in the place ;
 “ Their own, like others, soon their place resign’d,
 “ Or disappear’d, and left the first behind.” POPE.

That a conjectural critick should often be mistaken, cannot be wonderful, either to others, or himself, if it be considered, that in his art there is no system, no principal and axiomatical truth that regulates subordinate positions. His chance of error is renewed at every attempt ; an oblique view of the passage, a slight misapprehension of a phrase, a casual inattention to the parts connected, is sufficient to make him not only fail, but fail ridiculously ; and when he succeeds best he produces perhaps but one reading of many probable, and he that suggests another will always be able to dispute his claims.

It is an unhappy state, in which danger is hid under pleasure. The allurements of emendation are scarcely resistible. Conjecture has all the joy and all the pride of invention, and he that has once started a happy change, is too much delighted to consider what objections may rise against it.

Yet conjectural criticism has been of great use in the learned world ; nor is it my intention to

depreciate a study, that has exercised so many mighty minds, from the revival of learning to our own age, from the Bishop of Aleria⁵ to English Bentley. The criticks on ancient authors have, in the exercise of their sagacity, many assistances, which the editor of Shakspeare is condemned to want. They are employed upon grammatical and settled languages, whose construction contributes so much to perspicuity, that Homer has fewer passages unintelligible than Chaucer. The words have not only a known regimen, but invariable quantities, which direct and confine the choice. There are commonly more manuscripts than one; and they do not often conspire in the same mistakes. Yet Scaliger could confess to Salmasius how little satisfaction his emendations gave him. *Illudunt nobis conjecturæ, quarum nos pudet, posteaquam in meliores codices incidimus.* And Lipsius could complain, that criticks were making faults, by trying to remove them, *Ut olim vitiiis, ita nunc remediis laboratur.* And indeed, when mere conjecture is to be used, the emendations of Scaliger and Lipsius, notwithstanding their wonderful sagacity and erudition, are often vague and disputable, like mine or Theobald's.

Perhaps I may not be more censured for doing wrong, than for doing little; for raising in the

⁵ — the Bishop of Aleria —] John Andreas. He was secretary to the Vatican Library during the papacies of Paul II. and Sixtus IV. By the former he was employed to superintend such works as were to be multiplied by the new art of printing, at that time brought into Rome. He published Herodotus, Strabo, Livy, Aulus Gellius, &c. His school-fellow, Cardinal de Cusa, procured him the bishoprick of Accia, a province in Corsica; and Paul II. afterwards appointed him to that of Aleria in the same island, where he died in 1493. See Fabric. Bibl. Lat. Vol. III. 894. STEVENS.

publick, expectations which at last I have not answered. The expectation of ignorance is indefinite, and that of knowledge is often tyrannical. It is hard to satisfy those who know not what to demand, or those who demand by design what they think impossible to be done. I have indeed disappointed no opinion more than my own; yet I have endeavoured to perform my task with no slight solicitude. Not a single passage in the whole work has appeared to me corrupt, which I have not attempted to restore; or obscure, which I have not endeavoured to illustrate. In many I have failed like others; and from many, after all my efforts, I have retreated, and confessed the repulse. I have not passed over, with affected superiority, what is equally difficult to the reader and to myself, but where I could not instruct him, have owned my ignorance. I might easily have accumulated a mass of seeming learning upon easy scenes; but it ought not to be imputed to negligence, that, where nothing was necessary, nothing has been done, or that, where others have said enough, I have said no more.

Notes are often necessary, but they are necessary evils. Let him, that is yet unacquainted with the powers of Shakspeare, and who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play, from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. When his attention is strongly engaged, let it disdain alike to turn aside to the name of Theobald and of Pope. Let him read on through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue and his interest in

the fable. And when the pleasures of novelty have ceased, let him attempt exactness, and read the commentators.

Particular passages are cleared by notes, but the general effect of the work is weakened. The mind is refrigerated by interruption; the thoughts are diverted from the principal subject; the reader is weary, he suspects not why; and at last throws away the book which he has too diligently studied.

Parts are not to be examined till the whole has been surveyed; there is a kind of intellectual remoteness necessary for the comprehension of any great work in its full design and in its true proportions; a close approach shows the smaller niceties, but the beauty of the whole is discerned no longer.

It is not very grateful to consider how little the succession of editors has added to this author's power of pleasing. He was read, admired, studied, and imitated, while he was yet deformed with all the improprieties which ignorance and neglect could accumulate upon him; while the reading was yet not rectified, nor his allusions understood; yet then did Dryden pronounce, "that Shakspeare was the man, who, of all modern and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily: when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those, who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation; he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest

of mankind. He is many times flat and insipid; his comick wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him: no man can say, he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

“Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.”

It is to be lamented, that such a writer should want a commentary; that his language should become obsolete, or his sentiments obscure. But it is vain to carry wishes beyond the condition of human things; that which must happen to all, has happened to Shakspeare, by accident and time; and more than has been suffered by any other writer since the use of types, has been suffered by him through his own negligence of fame, or perhaps by that superiority of mind, which despised its own performances, when it compared them with its powers, and judged those works unworthy to be preserved, which the criticks of following ages were to contend for the fame of restoring and explaining.

Among these candidates of inferior fame, I am now to stand the judgment of the publick; and wish that I could confidently produce my commentary as equal to the encouragement which I have had the honour of receiving. Every work of this kind is by its nature deficient, and I should feel little solicitude about the sentence, were it to be pronounced only by the skilful and the learned.

Of what has been performed in this revisal,⁶ an

⁶ This paragraph relates to the edition published in 1773, by George Steevens, Esq. MALONE.

account is given in the following pages by Mr. Steevens, who might have spoken both of his own diligence and sagacity, in terms of greater self-approbation, without deviating from modesty or truth.⁷ JOHNSON.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

READER.

[Prefixed to Mr. STEEVENS'S Edition of Twenty of the old Quarto Copies of SHAKSPEARE, &c. in 4 Vols. 8vo. 1766.]

THE plays of Shakspeare have been so often republished, with every seeming advantage which the joint labours of men of the first abilities could procure for them, that one would hardly imagine they could stand in need of any thing beyond the illustration of some few dark passages. Modes of expression must remain in obscurity, or be retrieved from time to time, as chance may throw

⁷ All prefatory matters being in the present edition printed according to the order of time in which they originally appeared, the Advertisement Dr. Johnson refers to, will be found immediately after *Mr. Capell's Introduction*. STEEVENS.

the books of that age into the hands of criticks who shall make a proper use of them. Many have been of opinion that his language will continue difficult to all those who are unacquainted with the provincial expressions which they suppose him to have used; yet, for my own part, I cannot believe but that those which are now local may once have been universal, and must have been the language of those persons before whom his plays were represented. However, it is certain, that the instances of obscurity from this source are very few.

Some have been of opinion that even a particular syntax prevailed in the time of Shakspeare; but, as I do not recollect that any proofs were ever brought in support of that sentiment, I own I am of the contrary opinion.

In his time indeed a different arrangement of syllables had been introduced in imitation of the Latin, as we find in Ascham; and the verb was frequently kept back in the sentence; but in Shakspeare no marks of it are discernible; and though the rules of syntax were more strictly observed by the writers of that age than they have been since, he of all the number is perhaps the most ungrammatical. To make his meaning intelligible to his audience seems to have been his only care, and with the ease of conversation he has adopted its incorrectness.

The past editors, eminently qualified as they were by genius and learning for this undertaking, wanted industry; to cover which they published catalogues, transcribed at random, of a greater number of old copies than ever they can be supposed to have had in their possession; when, at the same time, they never examined the few which we

know they had, with any degree of accuracy. The last editor alone has dealt fairly with the world in this particular; he professes to have made use of no more than he had really seen, and has annexed a list of such to every play, together with a complete one of those supposed to be in being, at the conclusion of his work, whether he had been able to procure them for the service of it or not.

For these reasons I thought it would not be unacceptable to the lovers of Shakspeare to collate all the quartos I could find, comparing one copy with the rest, where there were more than one of the same play; and to multiply the chances of their being preserved, by collecting them into volumes, instead of leaving the few that have escaped, to share the fate of the rest, which was probably hastened by their remaining in the form of pamphlets, their use and value being equally unknown to those into whose hands they fell.

Of some I have printed more than one copy; as there are many persons, who, not contented with the possession of a finished picture of some great master, are desirous to procure the first sketch that was made for it, that they may have the pleasure of tracing the progress of the artist from the first light colouring to the finishing stroke. To such the earlier editions of *King John*, *Henry the Fifth*, *Henry the Sixth*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, will, I apprehend, not be unwelcome; since in these we may discern as much as will be found in the hasty outlines of the pencil, with a fair prospect of that perfection to which he brought every performance he took the pains to retouch.

The general character of the quarto editions may more advantageously be taken from the words

of Mr. Pope, than from any recommendation of my own.

“ The folio edition (says he) in which all the plays we now receive as his were first collected, was published by two players, Heminges and Condell, in 1623, seven years after his decease. They declare that all the other editions were stolen and surreptitious,⁸ and affirm theirs to be purged from the errors of the former. This is true as to the literal errors, and no other; for in all respects else it is far worse than the quartos.

“ First, because the additions of trifling and bombast passages are in this edition far more numerous. For whatever had been added since those quartos, by the actors, or had stolen from their mouths into the written parts, were from thence conveyed into the printed text, and all stand charged upon the author. He himself complained of this usage in *Hamlet*, where he wishes *those who play the clowns would speak no more than is set down for them*, (Act III. sc. iv.) But as a proof that he could not escape it, in the old editions of *Romeo and Juliet*, there is no hint of the mean conceits and ribaldries now to be found there. In others the scenes of the mobs, plebeians, and clowns, are vastly shorter than at present; and I have seen one in particular (which seems to have belonged to the play-house, by having the parts divided by lines, and the actors names in the margin,) where several of those very passages were added

* It may be proper on this occasion to observe, that the actors printed several of the plays in their folio edition from the very quarto copies which they are here striving to depreciate; and additional corruption is the utmost that these copies gained by passing through their hands.

in a written hand, which since are to be found in the folio.

“ In the next place, a number of beautiful passages were omitted, which were extant in the first single editions; as it seems without any other reason than their willingness to shorten some scenes.”

To this I must add, that I cannot help looking on the folio as having suffered other injuries from the licentious alteration of the players; as we frequently find in it an unusual word changed into one more popular; sometimes to the weakening of the sense, which rather seems to have been their work, who knew that plainness was necessary for the audience of an illiterate age, than that it was done by the consent of the author: for he would hardly have unnerved a line in his written copy, which they pretend to have transcribed, however he might have permitted many to have been familiarized in the representation. Were I to indulge my own private conjecture, I should suppose that his blotted manuscripts were read over by one to another among those who were appointed to transcribe them; and hence it would easily happen, that words of similar sound, though of senses directly opposite, might be confounded with each other. They themselves declare that Shakspeare's time of blotting was past, and yet half the errors we find in their edition could not be merely typographical. Many of the quartos (as our own printers assure me) were far from being unskilfully executed, and some of them were much more correctly printed than the folio, which was published at the charge of the same proprietors, whose names we find prefixed to the older copies; and I cannot join with Mr. Pope in acquitting that edition of more literal errors than those which went before it. The

particles in it seem to be as fortuitously disposed, and proper names as frequently undistinguished by Italick or capital letters from the rest of the text. The punctuation is equally accidental; nor do I see on the whole any greater marks of a skilful revisal, or the advantage of being printed from unblotted originals in the one, than in the other. One reformation indeed there seems to have been made, and that very laudable; I mean the substitution of more general terms for a name too often unnecessarily invoked on the stage; but no jot of obscenity is omitted: and their caution against profaneness is, in my opinion, the only thing for which we are indebted to the judgment of the editors of the folio.⁹

How much may be done by the assistance of the old copies will now be easily known; but a more difficult task remains behind, which calls for other abilities than are requisite in the laborious col-
lator.

From a diligent perusal of the comedies of contemporary authors, I am persuaded that the meaning of many expressions in Shakspeare might be retrieved; for the language of conversation can only be expected to be preserved in works, which in their time assumed the merit of being pictures of men and manners. The style of conversation we may suppose to be as much altered as that of

⁹ — and their caution against profaneness is, in my opinion, the only thing for which we are indebted to the editors of the folio.] I doubt whether we are so much indebted to the judgment of the editors of the folio edition, for their caution against profaneness, as to the statute 3 Jac. I. c. 21, which prohibits under severe penalties the use of the sacred name in any plays or interludes. This occasioned the playhouse copies to be altered, and they printed from the playhouse copies.

books; and, in consequence of the change, we have no other authorities to recur to in either case. Should our language ever be recalled to a strict examination, and the fashion become general of striving to maintain our old acquisitions, instead of gaining new ones, which we shall be at last obliged to give up, or be incumbered with their weight; it will then be lamented that no regular collection was ever formed of the old English books; from which, as from ancient repositories, we might recover words and phrases as often as caprice or wantonness should call for variety; instead of thinking it necessary to adopt new ones, or barter solid strength for feeble splendour, which no language has long admitted, and retained its purity.

We wonder that, before the time of Shakspeare, we find the stage in a state so barren of productions, but forget that we have hardly any acquaintance with the authors of that period, though some few of their dramattick pieces may remain. The same might be almost said of the interval between that age and the age of Dryden, the performances of which, not being preserved in sets, or diffused as now, by the greater number printed, must lapse apace into the same obscurity.

“ Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona

“ Multi _____.”

And yet we are contented, from a few specimens only, to form our opinions of the genius of ages gone before us. Even while we are blaming the taste of that audience which received with applause the worst plays in the reign of Charles the Second, we should consider that the few in possession of our theatre, which would never have been heard a second time had they been written now, were pro-

bably the best of hundreds which had been dismissed with general censure. The collection of plays, interludes, &c. made by Mr. Garrick, with an intent to deposit them hereafter in some publick library,¹ will be considered as a valuable acquisition; for pamphlets have never yet been examined with a proper regard to posterity. Most of the obsolete pieces will be found on enquiry to have been introduced into libraries but some few years since; and yet those of the present age, which may one time or other prove as useful, are still entirely neglected. I should be remiss, I am sure, were I to forget my acknowledgments to the gentleman I have just mentioned, to whose benevolence I owe the use of several of the scarcest quartos, which I could not otherwise have obtained; though I advertised for them, with sufficient offers, as I thought, either to tempt the casual owner to sell, or the curious to communicate them; but Mr. Garrick's zeal would not permit him to withhold any thing that might ever so remotely tend to show the perfections of that author who could only have enabled him to display his own.

It is not merely to obtain justice to Shakspeare, that I have made this collection, and advise others to be made. The general interest of English literature, and the attention due to our own language and history, require that our ancient writings should be diligently reviewed. There is no age which has not produced some works that deserved to be remembered; and as words and phrases are only understood by comparing them in different places, the lower writers must be read for the explanation of

¹ This collection is now, in pursuance of Mr. Garrick's Will, placed in the British Museum. REED.

the highest. No language can be ascertained and settled, but by deducing its words from their original sources, and tracing them through their successive varieties of signification; and this deduction can only be performed by consulting the earliest and intermediate authors.

Enough has been already done to encourage us to do more. Dr. Hickes, by reviving the study of the Saxon language, seems to have excited a stronger curiosity after old English writers, than ever had appeared before. Many volumes which were mouldering in dust have been collected; many authors which were forgotten have been revived; many laborious catalogues have been formed; and many judicious glossaries compiled; the literary transactions of the darker ages are now open to discovery; and the language in its intermediate gradations, from the Conquest to the Restoration, is better understood than in any former time.

To incite the continuance, and encourage the extension of this domestick curiosity, is one of the purposes of the present publication. In the plays it contains, the poet's first thoughts as well as words are preserved; the additions made in subsequent impressions, distinguished in Italicks, and the performances themselves make their appearance with every typographical error, such as they were before they fell into the hands of the player-editors. The various readings, which can only be attributed to chance, are set down among the rest, as I did not choose arbitrarily to determine for others which were useless, or which were valuable. And many words differing only by the spelling, or serving merely to show the difficulties which they to whose lot it first fell to disentangle their perplexities must

have encountered, are exhibited with the rest. I must acknowledge that some few readings have slipped in by mistake, which can pretend to serve no purpose of illustration, but were introduced by confining myself to note the minutest variations of the copies, which soon convinced me that the oldest were in general the most correct. Though no proof can be given that the poet superintended the publication of any one of these himself, yet we have little reason to suppose that he who wrote at the command of Elizabeth, and under the patronage of Southampton, was so very negligent of his fame, as to permit the most incompetent judges, such as the players were, to vary at their pleasure what he had set down for the first single editions; and we have better grounds for suspicion that his works did materially suffer from their presumptuous corrections after his death.

It is very well known, that before the time of Shakspeare, the art of making title-pages was practised with as much, or perhaps more success than it has been since. Accordingly, to all his plays we find long and descriptive ones, which, when they were first published, were of great service to the venders of them. Pamphlets of every kind were hawked about the streets by a set of people resembling his own *Autolycus*, who proclaimed aloud the qualities of what they offered to sale, and might draw in many a purchaser by the mirth he was taught to expect from *the humours of Corporal Nym, or the swaggering vaine of Auncient Pistoll*, who was not to be tempted by the representation of a fact merely historical. The players, however, laid aside the whole of this garniture, not finding it so necessary to procure success to a bulky volume,

when the author's reputation was established, as it had been to bespeak attention to a few straggling pamphlets while it was yet uncertain.

The sixteen plays which are not in these volumes, remained unpublished till the folio in the year 1623, though the compiler of a work called *Theatrical Records*, mentions different single editions of them all before that time. But as no one of the editors could ever meet with such, nor has any one else pretended to have seen them, I think myself at liberty to suppose the compiler supplied the defects of the list out of his own imagination; since he must have had singular good fortune to have been possessed of two or three different copies of all, when neither editors nor collectors, in the course of near fifty years, have been able so much as to obtain the sight of one of the number.*

At the end of the last volume I have added a tragedy of *King Leir*, published before that of Shakspeare, which it is not improbable he might have seen, as the father kneeling to the daughter, when she kneels to ask his blessing, is found in it; a circumstance two poets were not very likely to have hit on separately; and which seems borrowed by the latter with his usual judgment, it being the

* It will be obvious to every one acquainted with the ancient English language, that in almost all the titles of plays in this catalogue of Mr. *William Rufus Chetwood*, the spelling is constantly overcharged with such a superfluity of letters as is not to be found in the writings of Shakspeare or his contemporaries. A more bungling attempt at a forgery was never obruded on the publick. See the *British Theatre*, 1750; reprinted by Dodsley in 1756, under the title of "Theatrical Records, or an Account of English Dramatick Authors, and their Works," where all that is said concerning an Advertisement at the end of *Romeo and Juliet*, 1597, is equally false, no copy of that play having been ever published by *Andrew Wise*.

most natural passage in the whole play; and is introduced in such a manner, as to make it fairly his own. The ingenious editor of *The Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* having never met with this play, and as it is not preserved in Mr. Garrick's collection, I thought it a curiosity worthy the notice of the publick.

I have likewise reprinted Shakspeare's *Sonnets*, from a copy published in 1609, by G. Eld, one of the printers of his plays; which, added to the consideration that they made their appearance with his name, and in his life-time, seems to be no slender proof of their authenticity. The same evidence might operate in favour of several more plays which are omitted here, out of respect to the judgment of those who had omitted them before.⁹

It is to be wished that some method of publication most favourable to the character of an author were once established; whether we are to send into the world all his works without distinction, or arbitrarily to leave out what may be thought a disgrace to him. The first editors, who rejected *Pericles*, retained *Titus Andronicus*; and Mr. Pope, without any reason, named *The Winter's Tale*, a play that bears the strongest marks of the hand of Shakspeare, among those which he supposed to be spurious. Dr. Warburton has fixed a stigma on the three parts of *Henry the Sixth*, and some others:

“Inde Dolabella, est, atque hinc Antonius;”

and all have been willing to plunder Shakspeare,

⁹ *Lochrine*, 1595. *Sir John Oldcastle*, 1600. *London Prodigious*, 1605. *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*, 1609. *Puritan*, 1600. *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, 1613. *Yorkshire Tragedy*, 1608.

or mix up *a breed of barren metal* with his purest ore.

Joshua Barnes, the editor of Euripides, thought every scrap of his author so sacred, that he has preserved with the name of one of his plays, the only remaining word of it. The same reason indeed might be given in his favour, which caused the preservation of that valuable trisyllable; which is, that it cannot be found in any other place in the Greek language. But this does not seem to have been his only motive, as we find he has to the full as carefully published several detached and broken sentences, the gleanings from scholiasts, which have no claim to merit of that kind; and yet the author's works might be reckoned by some to be incomplete without them. If then this duty is expected from every editor of a Greek or Roman poet, why is not the same insisted on in respect of an English classick? But if the custom of preserving all, whether worthy of it or not, be *more honoured in the breach, than the observance*, the suppression at least should not be considered as a fault. The publication of such things as Swift had written merely to raise a laugh among his friends, has added something to the bulk of his works, but very little to his character as a writer. The four volumes¹ that came out since Dr. Hawkesworth's edition, not to look on them as a tax levied on the publick, (which I think one might without injustice,) contain not more than sufficient to have made one of real value; and there is a kind of disingenuity, not to give it a harsher title, in exhibiting what the author never meant should see the light;

¹ Volumes XIII. XIV. XV. and XVI. in large 8vo. Nine more have since been added. REED.

for no motive, but a sordid one, can betray the survivors to make that publick, which they themselves must be of opinion will be unfavourable to the memory of the dead.

Life does not often receive good unmixed with evil. The benefits of the art of printing are depraved by the facility with which scandal may be diffused, and secrets revealed; and by the temptation by which traffick solicits avarice to betray the weaknesses of passion, or the confidence of friendship.

I cannot forbear to think these posthumous publications injurious to society. A man conscious of literary reputation will grow in time afraid to write with tenderness to his sister, or with fondness to his child; or to remit on the slightest occasion, or most pressing exigence, the rigour of critical choice, and grammatical severity. That esteem which preserves his letters, will at last produce his disgrace; when that which he wrote to his friend or his daughter shall be laid open to the publick.

There is perhaps sufficient evidence, that most of the plays in question, unequal as they may be to the rest, were written by Shakspeare; but the reason generally given for publishing the less correct pieces of an author, that it affords a more impartial view of a man's talents or way of thinking, than when we only see him in form, and prepared for our reception, is not enough to condemn an editor who thinks and practises otherwise. For what is all this to show, but that every man is more dull at one time than another? a fact which the world would easily have admitted, without asking any proofs in its support that might be destructive to an author's reputation.

To conclude; if the work, which this publica-

tion was meant to facilitate, has been already performed, the satisfaction of knowing it to be so may be obtained from hence; if otherwise, let those who raised expectations of correctness, and through negligence defeated them, be justly exposed by future editors, who will now be in possession of by far the greatest part of what they might have enquired after for years to no purpose; for in respect of such a number of the old quartos as are here exhibited, the first folio is a common book. This advantage will at least arise, that future editors having equally recourse to the same copies, can challenge distinction and preference only by genius, capacity, industry, and learning.

As I have only collected materials for future artists, I consider what I have been doing as no more than an apparatus for their use. If the publick is inclined to receive it as such, I am amply rewarded for my trouble; if otherwise, I shall submit with cheerfulness to the censure which should equitably fall on an injudicious attempt; having this consolation, however, that my design amounted to no more than a wish to encourage others to think of preserving the oldest editions of the English writers, which are growing scarcer every day; and to afford the world all the assistance or pleasure it can receive from the most authentick copies extant of its NOBLEST POET.⁵

G. S.

⁵ As the foregoing Advertisement appeared when its author was young and uninformed, he cannot now abide by many sentiments expressed in it: nor would it have been here reprinted, but in compliance with Dr. Johnson's injunction, that all the relative Prefaces should continue to attend his edition of our author's plays. STEEVENS.

MR. CAPELL'S

INTRODUCTION.*

IT is said of the ostrich, that she drops her egg at random, to be dispos'd of as chance pleases; either brought to maturity by the sun's kindly warmth, or else crush'd by beasts and the feet of passers-by: such, at least, is the account which naturalists have given us of this extraordinary bird; and admitting it for a truth, she is in this a fit emblem of almost every great genius: they conceive and produce with ease those noble issues of human understanding; but incubation, the dull work of putting them correctly upon paper and afterwards publishing, is a task they can not away with. If the original state of all such authors' writings, even from HOMER downward, could be enquir'd into and known, they would yield proof in abundance of the justness of what is here asserted: but the author now before us shall suffice for them all; being at once the greatest instance of genius in producing noble things, and of negligence in providing for them afterwards. This negligence indeed was so great, and the condition in which

* Dr. Johnson's opinion of this performance may be known from the following passage in Mr. Boswell's *Life of Dr. Johnson*, second edit. Vol. III. p. 251: "If the man would have come to me, I would have endeavoured to endow his purpose with words, for as it is, he doth gabble monstrously."

his works are come down to us so very deform'd, that it has, of late years, induc'd several gentlemen to make a revision of them: but the publick seems not to be satisfy'd with any of their endeavours; and the reason of it's discontent will be manifest, when the state of his old editions, and the methods that they have taken to amend them, are fully lay'd open, which is the first business of this Introduction.

Of thirty-six plays which Shakspeare has left us, and which compose the collection that was afterwards set out in folio; thirteen only were publish'd in his life-time, that have much resemblance to those in the folio; these thirteen are—" *Hamlet, First and Second Henry IV. King Lear, Love's Labour's Lost, Merchant of Venice, Midsummer-Night's Dream, Much Ado about Nothing, Richard II. and III. Romeo and Juliet, Titus Andronicus, and Troilus and Cressida.*" Some others, that came out in the same period, bear indeed the titles of—" *Henry V. King John, Merry Wives of Windsor, and Taming of the Shrew;*"⁷ but are no other than either first draughts, or mutilated and perhaps surreptitious impressions of those plays, but whether of the two is not easy to determine: *King John* is

⁷ This is meant of the first quarto edition of *The Taming of the Shrew*; for the second was printed from the folio. But the play in this first edition appears certainly to have been a spurious one, from Mr. POPE's account of it, who seems to have been the only editor whom it was ever seen by: great pains have been taken to trace who he had it of, (for it was not in his collection) but without success.

[Mr. Capell afterwards procured a sight of this desideratum, a circumstance which he has quaintly recorded in a note annexed to the MS. catalogue of his *Shaksperiana*: "—lent by Mr. Malone, an Irish gentleman, living in Queen Ann Street East."]

certainly a first draught, and in two parts; and so much another play, that only one line of it is retain'd in the second: there is also a first draught of the *Second and Third Parts of Henry VI.* published in his life-time under the following title,—“*The whole Contention betweene the two famous Houses, Lancaster and Yorke:*” and to these plays, six in number, may be added—the first impression of *Romeo and Juliet*, being a play of the same stamp: The date of all these quarto's, and that of their several re-impressions, may be seen in a table that follows the Introduction. *Othello* came out only one year before the folio; and is, in the main, the same play that we have there: and this too is the case of the first-mention'd thirteen; notwithstanding there are in many of them great variations, and particularly in *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Richard III.* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

As for the plays, which, we say, are either the poet's first draughts, or else imperfect and stolen copies, it will be thought, perhaps, they might as well have been left out of the account: but they are not wholly useless; some *lacunæ*, that are in all the other editions, have been judiciously fill'd up in modern impressions by the authority of these copies; and in some particular passages of them, where there happens to be a greater conformity than usual between them and the more perfect editions, there is here and there a various reading that does honour to the poet's judgment, and should upon that account be presum'd the true one; in other respects, they have neither use nor merit, but are merely curiosities.

Proceed we then to a description of the other fourteen. They all abound in faults, though not in equal degree; and those faults are so numerous,

and of so many different natures, that nothing but a perusal of the pieces themselves can give an adequate conception of them; but amongst them are these that follow. Division of acts and scenes, they have none; *Othello* only excepted, which is divided into acts: entries of persons are extremely imperfect in them, (sometimes more, sometimes fewer than the scene requires) and their Exits are very often omitted; or, when mark'd, not always in the right place; and few scenical directions are to be met with throughout the whole: speeches are frequently confounded, and given to wrong persons, either whole, or in part; and sometimes, instead of the person speaking, you have the actor who presented him: and in two of the plays, (*Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Troilus and Cressida*,) the same matter, and in nearly the same words, is set down twice in some passages; which who sees not to be only a negligence of the poet, and that but one of them ought to have been printed? But the reigning fault of all is in the measure: prose is very often printed as verse, and verse as prose; or, where rightly printed verse, that verse is not always right divided: and in all these pieces, the songs are in every particular still more corrupt than the other parts of them. These are the general and principal defects: to which if you add—transposition of words, sentences, lines, and even speeches; words omitted, and others added without reason; and a punctuation so deficient, and so often wrong, that it hardly deserves regard; you have, upon the whole, a true but melancholy picture of the condition of these first printed plays: which bad as it is, is yet better than that of those which came after; or than that of the subsequent folio im-

pression of some of these which we are now speaking of.

This folio impression was sent into the world seven years after the author's death, by two of his fellow-players; and contains, besides the last mention'd fourteen, the true and genuine copies of the other six plays, and sixteen that were never publish'd before:⁸ the editors make great professions of fidelity, and some complaint of injury done to them and the author by stolen and maim'd copies; giving withal an advantageous, if just, idea of the copies which they have follow'd: but see the terms they make use of. "It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have bene wished, that the author himselfe had liv'd to have set forth, and overseen his owne writings; but since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his friends, the office of their care, and paine, to have collected & publish'd them; and so to have publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diverse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious impostors, that expos'd them: even those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect

⁸ There is yet extant in the books of the Stationers' Company, an entry bearing date—Feb. 12, 1624, to Messrs. Jaggard and Blount, the proprietors of this first folio, which is thus worded: "*Mr. Wm. Shakespear's Comedy's History's & Tragedy's so many of the said Copy's as bee not enter'd to other men:*" and this entry is follow'd by the titles of all those sixteen plays that were first printed in the folio: The other twenty plays (*Othello*, and *King John*, excepted; which the person who furnished this transcript, thinks he may have overlook'd,) are enter'd too in these books, under their respective years; but to whom the transcript says not.

of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceived them. Who, as he was a happie imitator of nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His minde and hand went together: and what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers." Who now does not feel himself inclin'd to expect an accurate and good performance in the edition of these prefacers? But alas, it is nothing less: for (if we except the six spurious ones, whose places were then supply'd by true and genuine copies) the editions of plays preceding the folio, are the very basis of those we have there; which are either printed from those editions, or from the copies which they made use of; and this is principally evident in—" *First and Second Henry IV. Love's Labour's Lost, Merchant of Venice, Midsummer-Night's Dream, Much Ado about Nothing, Richard II. Titus Andronicus, and Troilus and Cressida*;" for in the others we see somewhat a greater latitude, as was observ'd a little above: but in these plays, there is an almost strict conformity between the two impressions: some additions are in the second, and some omissions; but the faults and errors of the quarto's are all preserv'd in the folio, and others added to them; and what difference there is, is generally for the worse on the side of the folio editors; which should give us but faint hopes of meeting with greater accuracy in the plays which they first publish'd; and, accordingly, we find them subject to all the imperfections that have been noted in the former: nor is their edition in general distinguish'd by any mark of preference above the earliest quarto's, but that some of their plays are divided into acts, and some others into acts and scenes; and that with due precision,

and agreeable to the author's idea of the nature of such divisions. The order of printing these plays, the way in which they are class'd, and the titles given them, being matters of some curiosity, the Table that is before the first folio is here reprinted; and to it are added marks, put between crotchets, shewing the plays that are divided; *a* signifying—acts, *a* & *s*—acts and scenes.

TABLE of Plays in the folio.⁹

COMEDIES.	<i>Measure for Measure.</i> [<i>a</i> & <i>s.</i>]
<i>The Tempest.</i> [<i>a</i> & <i>s.</i>]	<i>The Comedy of Errors.*</i>
<i>The Two Gentlemen of</i> <i>Verona.*</i> [<i>a</i> & <i>s.</i>]	[<i>a.</i>] <i>Much ado about No-</i>
<i>The Merry Wives of</i> <i>Windsor.</i> [<i>a</i> & <i>s.</i>]	<i>thing.</i> [<i>a.</i>] <i>Loves Labour lost.*</i>

⁹ The plays, mark'd with asterisks, are spoken of by name, in a book, call'd—*Wit's Treasury, being the Second Part of Wit's Commonwealth*, written by Francis Meres, at p. 282: who, in the same paragraph, mentions another play as being Shakspeare's, under the title of *Loves Labours Wonne*; a title that seems well adapted to *All's well that ends well*, and under which it might be first acted. In the paragraph immediately preceding, he speaks of his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, and his *Sonnets*: this book was printed in 1598, by P. Short, for Cuthbert Burbie; octavo, small. The same author, at p. 283, mentions too a *Richard the Third*, written by Doctor Leg, author of another play, called *The Destruction of Jerusalem*. And there is in the Musæum, a manuscript Latin play upon the same subject, written by one Henry Lacy in 1586: which Latin play is but a weak performance; and yet seemeth to be the play spoken of by Sir John Harrington, (for the author was a Cambridge man, and of St. John's,) in this passage of his *Apologie of Poetrie*, prefix'd to his translation of Ariosto's *Orlando*, edit. 1591, fol: "—and for tragedies, to omit other famous tragedies; that, that was played at S. Johns in Cambridge of *Richard the 3.*

<i>Midsommer Nights Dreame.*</i> [a.]	<i>The First part of King Henry the Sixt.</i>
<i>The Merchant of Venice.*</i> [a.]	<i>The Second part of King Hen. the Sixt.</i>
<i>As you like it.</i> [a & s.]	<i>The Third part of King Henry the Sixt.</i>
<i>The Taming of the Shrew.</i>	<i>The Life & Death of Richard the Third.*</i>
<i>All is well, that Ends well.</i> [a]	[a & s.]
<i>Twelſe-Night, or what you will.</i> [a & s.]	<i>The Life of King Henry the Eight.</i> [a & s.]
<i>The Winters Tale.</i> [a & s.]	

HISTORIES.

<i>The Life and Death of King John.*</i> [a & s.]	[<i>Troylus and Cressida</i>] from the second folio ; omitted in the first.
<i>The Life & Death of Richard the second.*</i> [a & s.]	<i>The Tragedy of Coriola- nus.</i> [a]
<i>The First part of King Henry the fourth.</i> [a & s.]	<i>Titus Andronicus.*</i> [a.]
<i>The Second Part of K. Henry the fourth.*</i> [a & s.]	<i>Romeo and Juliet.*</i>
<i>The Life of King Henry the Fifth.</i>	<i>Timon of Athens.</i>
	<i>The Life and death of Julius Cæſar.</i> [a.]
	<i>The Tragedy of Macbeth.</i> [a & s.]
	<i>The Tragedy of Hamlet.</i>
	<i>King Lear.</i> [a & s.]

TRAGEDIES.

would move (I thinke) Phalaris the tyraunt, and terrifie all tyrā-
nous minded men, frō following their foolish ambitious humors,
seeing how his ambition made him kill his brother, his nephews,
his wife, beside infinit others; and last of all after a short and
troublesome raigne, to end his miserable life, and to have his
body harried after his death."

Othello, the Moore of Venice. [a & s.] *Cymbeline King of Britaine.* [a & s.]
Antony and Cleopater.

Having premis'd thus much about the state and condition of these first copies, it may not be improper, nor will it be absolutely a digression, to add something concerning their authenticity: in doing which, it will be greatly for the reader's ease,—and our own, to confine ourselves to the quarto's: which, it is hop'd, he will allow of; especially, as our intended vindication of them will also include in it (to the eye of a good observer) that of the plays that appear'd first in the folio: which therefore omitting, we now turn ourselves to the quarto's.

We have seen the slur that is endeavour'd to be thrown upon them indiscriminately by the player editors, and we see it too wip'd off by their having themselves follow'd the copies that they condemn. A modern editor, who is not without his followers, is pleas'd to assert confidently in his preface, that they are printed from “piece-meal parts, and copies of prompters:” but his arguments for it are some of them without foundation, and the others not conclusive; and it is to be doubted, that the opinion is only thrown out to countenance an abuse that has been carry'd to much too great lengths by himself and another editor,—that of putting out of the text passages that they did not like. These censures then, and this opinion being set aside, is it criminal to try another conjecture, and see what can be made of it? It is known, that Shakspeare liv'd to no great age, being taken off in his fifty-third year; and yet his works are

so numerous, that, when we take a survey of them, they seem the productions of a life of twice that length: for to the thirty-six plays in this collection, we must add seven, (one of which is in two parts,) perhaps written over again;¹ seven others that were publish'd some of them in his life-time, and all with his name; and another seven, that are upon good grounds imputed to him; making in all, fifty-eight plays; besides the part that he may reasonably be thought to have had in other men's labours, being himself a player and a manager of theatres: what his prose productions were, we know not: but it can hardly be suppos'd, that he, who had so considerable a share in the confidence of the Earls of Essex and Southampton, could be a mute spectator only of controversies in which they were so much interested; and his other poetical works, that are known, will fill a volume the size of these that we have here. When the number and bulk of these pieces, the shortness of his life, and the other busy employments of it are reflected upon duly, can it be a wonder that he should be so loose a transcriber of them? or why should we refuse to give credit to what his companions tell us, of the state of those transcriptions, and of the facility with which they were pen'd? Let it then be granted, that these quarto's are the poet's own copies, however they were come by; hastily written at first, and issuing from presses most of them as corrupt and licentious as can any where be produc'd, and not overseen by himself, nor by any of his friends: and there can be no stronger reason for subscribing to any opinion, than may be drawn in favour of this from the condition of

¹ Vide, this Introduction, p. 327.

all the other plays that were first printed in the folio; for, in method of publication, they have the greatest likeness possible to those which preceded them, and carry all the same marks of haste and negligence; yet the genuineness of the latter is attested by those who publish'd them, and no proof brought to invalidate their testimony. If it be still ask'd, what then becomes of the accusation brought against the quarto's by the player editors, the answer is not so far off as may perhaps be expected: it may be true that they were "stoln;" but stoln from the author's copies, by transcribers who found means to get at them:² and "maim'd" they must needs be, in respect of their many alterations after the first performance: and who knows, if the difference that is between them, in some of the plays that are common to them both, has not been studiously heighten'd by the player editors,—who had the means in their power, being masters of all the alterations,—to give at once a greater currency to their own lame edition, and support the charge which they bring against the quarto's? this, at least, is a probable opinion, and no bad way of accounting for those differences.³

* But see a note at p. 330, which seems to infer that they were fairly come by: which is, in truth, the editor's opinion, at least of some of them; though, in way of argument, and for the sake of clearness, he has here admitted the charge in that full extent in which they bring it.

² Some of these alterations are in the quarto's themselves; (another proof this, of their being authentick,) as in *Richard II*: where a large scene, that of the king's deposing, appears first in the copy of 1608, the third quarto impression, being wanting in the two former: and in one copy of *2 Henry IV*, there is a scene too that is not in the other, though of the same year; it is the first of Act the third. And *Hamlet* has some still more considerable; for the copy of 1605 has these words:—

It were easy to add abundance of other arguments in favour of these quarto's;—Such as, their exact affinity to almost all the publications of this sort that came out about that time; of which it will hardly be asserted by any reasoning man, that they are all clandestine copies, and publish'd without their authors' consent: next, the high improbability of supposing that none of these plays were of the poet's own setting-out: whose case is render'd singular by such a supposition; it being certain, that every other author of the time, without exception, who wrote any thing largely, publish'd some of his plays himself, and Ben Jonson all of them: nay, the very errors and faults of these quarto's,—of some of them at least, and those such as are brought against them by other arguers,—are, with the editor, proofs of their genuineness; for from what hand, but that of the author himself, could come those seemingly-strange repetitions which are spoken of at p. 329? those imperfect exits, and entries of persons who have no concern in the play at all, neither in the scene where they are made to enter, nor in any other part of it? yet such there are in several of these quarto's; and such might well be expected in the hasty draughts of so negligent an author, who neither saw at once all he might want, nor, in some instances, gave himself sufficient time to consider the fitness

“Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie:” now though no prior copy has yet been produc'd, it is certain there was such by the testimony of this title-page: and that the play was in being at least nine years before, is prov'd by a book of Doctor Lodge's printed in 1596; which play was perhaps an imperfect one; and not unlike that we have now of *Romeo and Juliet*, printed the year after; a fourth instance too of what the note advances.

of what he was then penning. These and other like arguments might, as is said before, be collected, and urg'd for the plays that were first publish'd in the quarto's; that is, for fourteen of them, for the other six are out of the question: but what has been enlarg'd upon above, of their being follow'd by the folio, and their apparent general likeness to all the other plays that are in that collection, is so very forcible as to be sufficient of itself to satisfy the unprejudic'd, that the plays of both impressions spring all from the same stock, and owe their numerous imperfections to one common origin and cause,—the too-great negligence and haste of their over-careless producer.

But to return to the thing immediately treated,—the state of the old editions. The quarto's went through many impressions, as may be seen in the Table: and, in each play, the last is generally taken from the impression next before it, and so onward to the first; the few that come not within this rule, are taken notice of in the Table: and this further is to be observ'd of them: that, generally speaking, the more distant they are from the original, the more they abound in faults; 'till, in the end, the corruptions of the last copies become so excessive, as to make them of hardly any worth. The folio too had it's re-impressions, the dates and notices of which are likewise in the Table, and they tread the same round as did the quarto's: only that the third of them has seven plays more, (see their titles below,⁴) in which it is follow'd by

⁴ *Lochrine*; *The London Prodigal*; *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*; *The Puritan, or, the Widow of Watling Street*; *Sir John Oldcastle*; *Thomas Lord Cromwell*; and *The Yorkshire Tragedy*: And the imputed ones, mention'd a little above, are these;—*The Arraignment of Paris*; *Birth of Merlin*; *Fair Em*; *Ed-*

the last; and that again by the first of the modern impressions, which come now to be spoken of.

If the stage be a mirror of the times, as undoubtedly it is, and we judge of the age's temper by what we see prevailing there, what must we think of the times that succeeded Shakspeare? Jonson, favour'd by a court that delighted only in masques, had been gaining ground upon him even in his life-time; and his death put him in full possession of a post he had long aspir'd to, the empire of the drama: the props of this new king's throne, were—Fletcher, Shirley, Middleton, Massinger, Broome, and others; and how unequal they all were, the monarch and his subjects too, to the poet they came after, let their works testify: yet they had the vogue on their side, during all those blessed times that preceded the civil war, and Shakspeare was held in disesteem. The war, and medley government that follow'd, swept all these things away: but they were restor'd with the king;

ward III. Merry Devil of Edmonton; Mucedorus; and The Two Noble Kinsmen: but in *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, Rowley is call'd his partner in the title-page; and Fletcher, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. What external proofs there are of their coming from Shakspeare, are gather'd all together, and put down in the fable; and further it not concerns us to engage: but let those who are inclin'd to dispute it, carry this along with them:—that London, in Shakspeare's time, had a multitude of playhouses; erected some in inn-yards, and such like places, and frequented by the lowest of the people; such audiences might have been seen some years ago in Southwark and Bartholomew, and may be seen at this day in the country; to which it was also a custom for players to make excursion, at wake times and festivals: and for such places, and such occasions, might these pieces be compos'd in the author's early time; the worst of them suiting well enough to the parties they might be made for:—and this, or something nearly of this sort, may have been the case too of some plays in his great collection, which shall be spoken of in their place.

and another stage took place, in which Shakspeare had little share. Dryden had then the lead, and maintain'd it for half a century: though his government was sometimes disputed by Lee, Tate, Shadwell, Wytcherley, and others; weaken'd much by *The Rehearsal*; and quite overthrown in the end by Otway, and Rowe: what the cast of their plays was, is known to every one: but that Shakspeare, the true and genuine Shakspeare, was not much relish'd, is plain from the many alterations of him, that were brought upon the stage by some of those gentlemen, and by others within that period.

But, from what has been said, we are not to conclude—that the poet had no admirers: for the contrary is true; and he had in all this interval no inconsiderable party amongst men of the greatest understanding, who both saw his merit, in despite of the darkness it was then wrapt up in, and spoke loudly in his praise; but the stream of the publick favour ran the other way. But this too coming about at the time we are speaking of, there was a demand for his works, and in a form that was more convenient than the folio's; in consequence of which, the gentleman last mentioned was set to work by the booksellers; and, in 1709, he put out an edition in six volumes octavo, which, unhappily, is the basis of all the other moderns: for this editor went no further than to the edition nearest to him in time, which was the folio of 1685, the last and worst of those impressions: this he republish'd with great exactness; correcting here and there some of it's grossest mistakes, and dividing into acts and scenes the plays that were not divided before.

But no sooner was this edition in the hands of

the publick, than they saw in part its deficiencies, and one of another sort began to be required of them; which accordingly was set about some years after by two gentlemen at once, Mr. Pope and Mr. Theobald. The labours of the first came out in 1725, in six volumes quarto: and he has the merit of having first improv'd his author, by the insertion of many large passages, speeches, and single lines, taken from the quarto's; and of amending him in other places, by readings fetch'd from the same: but his materials were few, and his collation of them not the most careful; which, join'd to other faults, and to that main one—of making his predecessor's the copy himself follow'd, brought his labours in disrepute, and has finally sunk them in neglect.

His publication retarded the other gentleman, and he did not appear 'till the year 1733, when his work too came out in seven volumes, octavo. The opposition that was between them seems to have inflam'd him, which was heighten'd by other motives, and he declaims vehemently against the work of his antagonist: which yet serv'd him for a model; and his own is made only a little better, by his having a few more materials; of which he was not a better collator than the other, nor did he excel him in use of them; for, in this article, both their judgments may be equally call'd in question; in what he has done that is conjectural, he is rather more happy; but in this he had large assistances.

But the gentleman that came next, is a critick of another stamp: and pursues a track, in which it is greatly to be hop'd he will never be follow'd in the publication of any authors whatsoever: for this were, in effect, to annihilate them,

if carry'd a little further; by destroying all marks of peculiarity and notes of time, all easiness of expression and numbers, all justness of thought, and the nobility of not a few of their conceptions: The manner in which his author is treated, excites an indignation that will be thought by some to vent itself too strongly; but terms weaker would do injustice to my feelings, and the censure shall be hazarded. Mr. Pope's edition was the groundwork of this over-bold one; splendidly printed at Oxford in six quarto volumes, and publish'd in the year 1744: the publisher disdains all collation of folio, or quarto; and fetches all from his great self, and the moderns his predecessors: wantoning in very licence of conjecture; and sweeping all before him, (without notice, or reason given,) that not suits his taste, or lies level to his conceptions. But this justice should be done him:—as his conjectures are numerous, they are oftentimes not unhappy; and some of them are of that excellence, that one is struck with amazement to see a person of so much judgment as he shows himself in them, adopt a method of publishing that runs counter to all the ideas that wise men have hitherto entertain'd of an editor's province and duty.

The year 1747 produc'd a fifth edition, in eight octavo volumes, publish'd by Mr. Warburton; which though it is said in the title-page to be the joint work of himself and the second editor, the third ought rather to have been mention'd, for it is printed from his text. The merits of this performance have been so thoroughly discuss'd in two very ingenious books, *The Canons of Criticism*, and *Revisal of Shakspeare's Text*, that it is needless to say any more of it: this only shall be added to what may be there met with,—that the edition is

not much benefited by fresh acquisitions from the old ones, which this gentleman seems to have neglected.⁵

Other charges there are, that might be brought against these modern impressions, without infringing the laws of truth or candour either: but what is said, will be sufficient; and may satisfy their greatest favourers,—that the superstructure cannot be a sound one, which is built upon so bad a foundation as that work of Mr. Rowe's; which all of them, as we see, in succession, have yet made their corner-stone: The truth is, it was impossible that such a beginning should end better than it has done: the fault was in the setting-out; and all the diligence that could be us'd, join'd to the discernment of a Pearce, or a Bentley, could never purge their author of all his defects by their method of proceeding.

The editor now before you was appriz'd in time of this truth; saw the wretched condition his author was reduc'd to by these late tamperings, and thought seriously of a cure for it, and that so long ago as the year 1745; for the attempt was first suggested by that gentleman's performance, which

⁵ It will perhaps be thought strange, that nothing should be said in this place of another edition that came out about a twelve-month ago, in eight volumes, octavo; but the reasons for it are these:—There is no use made of it, nor could be; for the present was finish'd, within a play or two, and printed too in great part, before that appear'd: the first sheet of this work (being the first of Vol. II.) went to the press in September 1760: and this volume was follow'd by volumes VIII. IV. IX. I. VI. and VII; the last of which was printed off in August 1765: In the next place, the merits and demerits of it are unknown to the present editor even at this hour: this only he has perceiv'd in it, having look'd it but slightly over, that the text it follows is that of its nearest predecessor, and from that copy it was printed.

came out at Oxford the year before : which when he had perus'd with no little astonishment, and consider'd the fatal consequences that must inevitably follow the imitation of so much licence, he resolv'd himself to be the champion ; and to exert to the uttermost such abilities as he was master of, to save from further ruin an edifice of this dignity, which England must for ever glory in. Hereupon he possess'd himself of the other modern editions, the folio's, and as many quarto's as could presently be procur'd ; and, within a few years after, fortune and industry help'd him to all the rest, six only excepted ;⁶ adding to them withal twelve more, which the compilers of former tables had no knowledge of. Thus furnish'd, he fell immediately to collation,—which is the first step in works of this nature ; and, without it, nothing is done to purpose,—first of moderns with moderns, then of moderns with ancients, and afterwards of ancients with others more ancient : 'till, at the last, a ray of light broke forth upon him, by which he hop'd to find his way through the wilderness of these editions into that fair country the poet's real habitation. He had not proceeded far in his collation, before he saw cause to come to this resolution ;—to stick invariably to the old editions, (that is, the

⁶ But of one of these six, (a 1 *Henry IV.* edition 1604) the editor thinks he is possessed of a very large fragment, imperfect only in the first and last sheet ; which has been collated, as far as it goes, along with others : And of the twelve quarto editions, which he has had the good fortune to add to those that were known before, some of them are of great value ; as may be seen by looking into the Table.

[As this table relates chiefly to Mr. Capell's desiderata, &c. (and had been anticipated by another table equally comprehensive, which the reader will find in the next volume,) it is here omitted.]

best of them,) which hold now the place of manuscripts, no scrap of the author's writing having the luck to come down to us; and never to depart from them, but in cases where reason, and the uniform practice of men of the greatest note in this art, tell him—they may be quitted; nor yet in those, without notice. But it will be necessary, that the general method of this edition should now be lay'd open; that the publick may be put in a capacity not only of comparing it with those they already have, but of judging whether any thing remains to be done towards the fixing this author's text in the manner himself gave it.

It is said a little before,—that we have nothing of his in writing; that the printed copies are all that is left to guide us; and that those copies are subject to numberless imperfections, but not all in like degree: our first business then, was—to examine their merit, and see on which side the scale of goodness preponderated; which we have generally found, to be on that of the most ancient: it may be seen in the Table, what editions are judg'd to have the preference among those plays that were printed singly in quarto; and for those plays, the text of those editions is chiefly adher'd to: in all the rest, the first folio is follow'd; the text of which is by far the most faultless of the editions in that form; and has also the advantage in three quarto plays, in *2 Henry IV. Othello,* and *Richard III.* Had the editions thus follow'd been printed with carefulness, from correct copies, and copies not added to or otherwise alter'd after those impressions, there had been no occasion for going any further: but this was not at all the case, even in the best of them; and it therefore became proper and necessary to look into the other old editions,

and to select from thence whatever improves the author, or contributes to his advancement in perfectness, the point in view throughout all this performance : that they do improve him, was with the editor an argument in their favour; and a presumption of genuineness for what is thus selected, whether additions, or differences of any other nature; and the causes of their appearing in some copies, and being wanting in others, cannot now be discover'd, by reason of the time's distance, and defect of fit materials for making the discovery. Did the limits of his Introduction allow of it, the editor would gladly have dilated and treated more at large this article of his plan; as that which is of greatest importance, and most likely to be contested of any thing in it: but this doubt, or this dissent, (if any be,) must come from those persons only who are not yet possess'd of the idea they ought to entertain of these ancient impressions; for of those who are, he fully persuades himself he shall have both the approof and the applause. But without entering further in this place into the reasonableness, or even necessity, of so doing, he does for the present acknowledge—that he has every-where made use of such materials as he met with in other old copies, which he thought improv'd the editions that are made the ground-work of the present text: and whether they do so or no, the judicious part of the world may certainly know, by turning to a collection that will be publish'd; where all discarded readings are enter'd, all additions noted, and variations of every kind; and the editions specify'd, to which they severally belong.

But, when these helps were administer'd, there was yet behind a very great number of passages,

labouring under various defects and those of various degree, that had their cure to seek from some other sources, that of copies affording it no more: For these he had recourse in the first place to the assistance of modern copies: and, where that was incompetent, or else absolutely deficient, which was very often the case, there he sought the remedy in himself, using judgment and conjecture; which, he is bold to say, he will not be found to have exercis'd wantonly, but to follow the establish'd rules of critique with soberness and temperance. These emendations, (whether of his own, or other gentlemen,*) carrying in themselves a face of certainty, and coming in aid of places that were apparently corrupt, are admitted into the text, and the rejected reading is always put below; some others,—that are neither of that certainty, nor are of that necessity, but are specious and plausible, and may be thought by some to mend the passage they belong to,—will have a place in the collection that is spoken of above. But where it is said, that the rejected reading is always put below, this must be taken with some restriction: for some of the

* In the manuscripts from which all these plays are printed, the emendations are given to their proper owners by initials and other marks that are in the margin of those manuscripts; but they are suppressed in the print for two reasons: First, their number, in some pages, makes them a little unsightly: and the editor professes himself weak enough to like a well-printed book: In the next place, he does declare—that his only object has been, to do service to his great author; which provided it be done, he thinks it of small importance by what hand the service was administer'd: If the partizans of former editors shall chance to think them injur'd by this suppression, he must upon this occasion violate the rules of modesty, by declaring—that he himself is the most injur'd by it; whose emendations are equal, at least in number, to all theirs if put together; to say nothing of his recover'd readings, which are more considerable still.

emendations, and of course the ancient readings upon which they are grounded, being of a complicated nature, the general method was there inconvenient; and, for these few, you are refer'd to a note which will be found among the rest: and another sort there are, that are simply insertions; these are effectually pointed out by being printed in the gothick or black character.

Hitherto, the defects and errors of these old editions have been of such a nature, that we could lay them before the reader, and submit to his judgment the remedies that are apply'd to them; which is accordingly done, either in the page itself where they occur, or in some note that is to follow: but there are some behind that would not be so manag'd; either by reason of their frequency, or difficulty of subjecting them to the rules under which the others are brought: they have been spoken of before at p. 329, where the corruptions are all enumerated, and are as follows;—a want of proper exits and entrances, and of many scenical directions, throughout the work in general, and, in some of the plays, a want of division; and the errors are those of measure, and punctuation: all these are mended, and supply'd, without notice and silently; but the reasons for so doing, and the method observ'd in doing it, shall be a little enlarg'd upon, that the fidelity of the editor, and that which is chiefly to distinguish him from those who have gone before, may stand sacred and unimpeachable; and, first, of the division.

The thing chiefly intended in reprinting the list of titles that may be seen at p. 332, was,—to show which plays were divided into acts, which into acts and scenes, and which of them were not divided at all; and the number of the first class is—

eight; of the third—eleven: for though in *Henry V.* 1 *Henry VI.* *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*, there is some division aim'd at; yet it is so lame and erroneous, that it was thought best to consider them as totally undivided, and to rank them accordingly: now when these plays were to be divided, as well those of the first class as those of the third, the plays of the second class were studiously attended to; and a rule was pick'd out from them, by which to regulate this division: which rule might easily have been discover'd before, had but any the least pains have been bestow'd upon it; and certainly it was very well worth it, since neither can the representation be manag'd, nor the order and thread of the fable be properly conceiv'd by the reader, 'till this article is adjusted. The plays that are come down to us divided, must be look'd upon as of the author's own settling; and in them, with regard to acts, we find him following establish'd precepts, or, rather, conforming himself to the practice of some other dramattick writers of his time; for they, it is likely, and nature, were the books he was best acquainted with: his scene divisions he certainly did not fetch from writers upon the drama; for, in them, he observes a method in which perhaps he is singular, and he is invariable in the use of it: with him, a change of scene implies generally a change of place, though not always; but always an entire evacuation of it, and a succession of new persons: that *liaison* of the scenes, which Jonson seems to have attempted, and upon which the French stage prides itself, he does not appear to have had any idea of; of the other unities he was perfectly well appriz'd; and has follow'd them, in one of his plays, with as great strictness and greater happiness than can

perhaps be met with in any other writer : the play meant is *The Comedy of Errors* ; in which the action is one, the place one, and the time such as even Aristotle himself would allow of—the revolution of half a day : but even in this play, the change of scene arises from change of persons, and by that it is regulated ; as are also all the other plays that are not divided in the folio : for whoever will take the trouble to examine those that are divided, (and they are pointed out for him in the list,) will see them conform exactly to the rule above-mention'd ; and can then have but little doubt, that it should be apply'd to all the rest.* To have distinguish'd these divisions,—made (indeed) without the authority, but following the example of the folio,—had been useless and troublesome ; and the editor fully persuades himself, that what he has said will be sufficient, and that he shall be excus'd by the ingenious and candid for overpassing them without further notice : whose pardon hé hopes also to have for some other unnotic'd matters that are related to this in hand, such as—marking the place of action, both general and particular ; supplying scenical directions ; and due regulating of exits, and entrances : for the first, there is no title in the old editions ; and in both the latter, they are so deficient and faulty throughout, that it would not be much amiss if we look'd upon them as wanting too ; and then all these several articles might be

* The divisions that are in the folio are religiously adher'd to, except in two or three instances which will be spoken of in their place ; so that, as is said before, a perusal of those old-divided plays will put every one in a capacity of judging whether the present editor has proceeded rightly or no : the current editions are divided in such a manner, that nothing like a rule can be collected from any of them.

consider'd as additions, that needed no other pointing out than a declaration that they are so: the light they throw upon the plays in general, and particularly upon some parts of them,—such as, the battle scenes throughout; Cæsar's passage to the senate-house, and subsequent assassination; Antony's death; the surprizal and death of Cleopatra; that of Titus Andronicus; and a multitude of others, which are all directed new in this edition,—will justify these insertions; and may, possibly, merit the reader's thanks, for the great aids which they afford to his conception.

It remains now to speak of errors of the old copies which are here amended without notice, to wit—the pointing, and wrong division of much of them respecting the numbers. And as to the first, it is so extremely erroneous, throughout all the plays, and in every old copy, that small regard is due to it; and it becomes an editor's duty, (instead of being influenc'd by such a punctuation, or even casting his eyes upon it, to attend closely to the meaning of what is before him, and to new-point it accordingly: was it the business of this edition—to make parade of discoveries, this article alone would have afforded ample field for it; for a very great number of passages are now first set to rights by this only, which, before, had either no sense at all, or one unsuited to the context, and unworthy the noble penner of it; but all the emendations of this sort, though inferior in merit to no others whatsoever, are consign'd to silence; some few only excepted, of passages that have been much contested, and whose present adjustment might possibly be call'd in question again; these will be spoken of in some note, and a reason given for embracing them: all the other parts of the works have been examin'd

with equal diligence, and equal attention; and the editor flatters himself, that the punctuation he has follow'd, (into which he has admitted some novelties,⁹) will be found of so much benefit to his author, that those who run may read, and that with profit and understanding. The other great mistake in these old editions, and which is very insufficiently rectify'd in any of the new ones, relates to the poet's numbers; his verse being often wrong divided, or printed wholly as prose, and his prose as often printed like verse: this, though not so universal as their wrong pointing, is yet so extensive an error in the old copies, and so impossible to be pointed out otherwise than by a note, that an editor's silent amendment of it is surely pardonable at least; for who would not be disgusted with that perpetual sameness which must necessarily have been in all the notes of this sort? Neither are they, in truth, emendations that require proving; every good ear does immediately adopt them, and every lover of the poet will be pleas'd with that accession of beauty which results to him from them: it is perhaps to be lamented, that there is yet standing in his works much unpleasing mixture of prosaick and metrical dialogue, and sometimes in places seemingly improper, as—in *Othello*, Vol. XIX. p. 273; and some others which men of judgment will be able to pick out for themselves: but these blemishes are not now to be wip'd away, at least not by an editor, whose province it far ex-

⁹ If the use of these new pointings, and also of certain marks that he will meet with in this edition, do not occur immediately to the reader, (as we think it will) he may find it explain'd to him at large in the preface to a little octavo volume intitl'd—“*Prolusions, or, Select Pieces of Ancient Poetry;*” publish'd in 1760 by this editor, and printed for Mr. Tonson.

ceeds to make a change of this nature; but must remain as marks of the poet's negligence, and of the haste with which his pieces were compos'd: what he manifestly intended prose, (and we can judge of his intentions only from what appears in the editions that are come down to us,) should be printed as prose, what verse as verse; which, it is hop'd, is now done, with an accuracy that leaves no great room for any further considerable improvements in that way.

Thus have we run through, in as brief a manner as possible, all the several heads, of which it was thought proper and even necessary that the publick should be appriz'd; as well those that concern preceding editions, both old and new; as the other which we have just quitted,—the method observ'd in the edition that is now before them: which though not so entertaining, it is confess'd, nor affording so much room to display the parts and talents of a writer, as some other topicks that have generally supply'd the place of them; such as—criticisms or panegyricks upon the author, historical anecdotes, essays, and *florilegia*; yet there will be found some odd people, who may be apt to pronounce of them—that they are suitable to the place they stand in, and convey all the instruction that should be look'd for in a preface. Here, therefore, we might take our leave of the reader, bidding him welcome to the banquet that is set before him; were it not apprehended, and reasonably, that he will expect some account why it is not serv'd up to him at present with it's accusom'd and laudable garniture, of "*Notes, Glossaries,*" &c. Now though it might be reply'd, as a reason for what is done,—that a very great part of the world, amongst whom is the editor himself, profess much dislike

to this paginary intermixture of text and comment; in works meerly of entertainment, and written in the language of the country; as also—that he, the editor, does not possess the secret of dealing out notes by measure, and distributing them amongst his volumes so nicely that the equality of their bulk shall not be broke in upon the thickness of a sheet of paper; yet, having other matter at hand which he thinks may excuse him better, he will not have recourse to these above-mention'd: which matter is no other, than his very strong desire of approving himself to the publick a man of integrity; and of making his future present more perfect, and as worthy of their acceptance as his abilities will let him. For the explaining of what is said, which is a little wrap'd up in mystery at present, we must inform that publick—that another work is prepar'd, and in great forwardness, having been wrought upon many years; nearly indeed as long as the work which is now before them, for they have gone hand in hand almost from the first: this work, to which we have given for title *The School of Shakspeare*, consists wholly of extracts, (with observations upon some of them, interspers'd occasionally,) from books that may properly be call'd—his school; as they are indeed the sources from which he drew the greater part of his knowledge in mythology and classical matters,¹ his fable, his history, and even

¹ Though our expressions, as we think, are sufficiently guarded in this place, yet, being fearful of misconstruction, we desire to be heard further as to this affair of his learning. It is our firm belief then,—that Shakspeare was very well grounded, at least in *Latin*, at school: It appears from the clearest evidence possible, that his father was a man of no little substance, and very well able to give him such education; which, perhaps, he

the seeming peculiarities of his language : to furnish out these materials, all the plays have been

might be inclin'd to carry further, by sending him to a university; but was prevented in this design (if he had it) by his son's early marriage, which, from monuments, and other like evidence, it appears with no less certainty, must have happen'd before he was seventeen, or very soon after : the displeasure of his father, which was the consequence of this marriage, or else some excesses which he is said to have been guilty of, it is probable, drove him up to town; where he engag'd early in some of the theatres, and was honour'd with the patronage of the Earl of Southampton : his *Venus and Adonis* is address'd to the Earl in a very pretty and modest dedication, in which he calls it—"the first heire of his invention;" and ushers it to the world with this singular motto,—

“Vilia miretur vulgus, mihi flavus Apollo

“Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua;”

and the whole poem, as well as his *Lucrece*, which follow'd it soon after, together with his choice of those subjects, are plain marks of his acquaintance with some of the Latin classicks, at least at that time: The dissipation of youth, and, when that was over, the busy scene in which he instantly plung'd himself, may very well be suppos'd to have hinder'd his making any great progress in them; but that such a mind as his should quite lose the tincture of any knowledge it had once been imbued with, can not be imagin'd: accordingly we see, that this school-learning (for it was no more) stuck with him to the last; and it was the recordations, as we may call it, of that learning which produc'd the Latin that is in many of his plays, and most plentifully in those that are most early: every several picce of it is aptly introduc'd, given to a proper character, and utter'd upon some proper occasion; and so well cemented, as it were, and join'd to the passage it stands in, as to deal conviction to the judicious—that the whole was wrought up together, and fetch'd from his own little store, upon the sudden and without study.

The other languages, which he has sometimes made use of, that is—the *Italian* and *French*, are not of such difficult conquest that we should think them beyond his reach: an acquaintance with the first of them was a sort of fashion in his time; Surrey and the sonnet-writers set it on foot, and it was continu'd by Sidney and Spenser: all our poetry issu'd from that school; and it would be wonderful, indeed, if he, whom we saw a little before putting himself with so much zeal under the banner of

perus'd, within a very small number, that were in print in his time or some short time after; the

the muses, should not have been tempted to taste at least of that fountain to which of all his other brethren there was such continual resort: let us conclude then, that he did taste of it; but, happily for himself, and more happy for the world that enjoys him now, he did not find it to his relish, and threw away the cup: metaphor apart, it is evident—that he had some little knowledge of the Italian: perhaps, just as much as enabl'd him to read a novel or a poem; and to put some few fragments of it, with which his memory furnish'd him, into the mouth of a pedant, or fine gentleman.

How or when he acquir'd it we must be content to be ignorant, but of the French language he was somewhat a greater master than of the two that have gone before; yet, unless we except their novelists, he does not appear to have had much acquaintance with any of their writers; what he has given us of it is merely colloquial, flows with great ease from him, and is reasonably pure: Should it be said—he had travel'd for't, we know not who can confute us: in his days indeed, and with people of his station, the custom of doing so was rather rarer than in ours; yet we have met with an example, and in his own band of players, in the person of the very famous Mr. Kempe; of whose travels there is mention in a silly old play, call'd—*The Return from Parnassus*, printed in 1606, but written much earlier in the time of Queen Elizabeth: add to this—the exceeding great liveliness and justness that is seen in many descriptions of the sea and of promontories, which, if examin'd, shew another sort of knowledge of them than is to be gotten in books or relations; and if these be lay'd together, this conjecture of his travelling may not be thought void of probability.

One opinion, we are sure, which is advanc'd somewhere or other, is utterly so;—that this Latin, and this Italian, and the language that was last mention'd, are insertions and the work of some other hand: there has been started now and then in philological matters a proposition so strange as to carry its own condemnation in it, and this is of the number; it has been honour'd already with more notice than it is any ways intitl'd to, where the poet's Latin is spoke of a little while before; to which answer it must be left, and we shall pass on—to profess our entire belief of the genuineness of every several part of this work, and that he only was the author of it: he might write beneath himself at particular times, and certainly does in some places; but

chroniclers his contemporaries, or that a little preceded him; many original poets of that age, and many translators; with essayists, novellists, and story-mongers in great abundance: every book, in short, has been consulted that it was possible to procure, with which it could be thought he was acquainted, or that seem'd likely to contribute any thing towards his illustration. To what degree they illustrate him, and in how new a light they set the character of this great poet himself can never be conceiv'd as it should be, 'till these extracts come forth to the publick view, in their just magnitude, and properly digested: for besides the various passages that he has either made use of or alluded to, many other matters have been selected and will be found in this work, tending all to the same end,—our better knowledge of him and his writings; and one class of them there is, for which we shall perhaps be censur'd as being too profuse in them, namely—the almost innumerable examples, drawn from these ancient writers, of words and modes of expression which many have thought

he is not always without excuse; and it frequently happens that a weak scene serves to very good purpose, as will be made appear at one time or other. It may be thought that there is one argument still unanswer'd, which has been brought against his acquaintance with the Latin and other languages; and that is,—that, had he been so acquainted, it could not have happen'd but that some imitations would have crept into his writings, of which certainly there are none: but this argument has been answer'd in effect; when it was said—that his knowledge in these languages was but slender, and his conversation with the writers in them slender too of course: but had it been otherwise, and he as deeply read in them as some people have thought him, his works (it is probable) had been as little deform'd with imitations as we now see them: Shakspeare was far above such a practice; he had the stores in himself, and wanted not the assistance of a foreign hand to dress him up in things of their lending.

peculiar to Shakspeare, and have been too apt to impute to him as a blemish : but the quotations of this class do effectually purge him from such a charge, which is one reason of their profusion ; though another main inducement to it has been, a desire of shewing the true force and meaning of the aforesaid unusual words and expressions ; which can no way be better ascertain'd, than by a proper variety of well-chosen examples. Now,—to bring this matter home to the subject for which it has been alledg'd, and upon whose account this affair is now lay'd before the publick somewhat before it's time,—who is so short-sighted as not to perceive, upon first reflection, that, without manifest injustice, the notes upon this author could not precede the publication of the work we have been describing ; whose choicest materials would unavoidably and certainly have found a place in those notes, and so been twice retail'd upon the world ; a practice which the editor has often condemn'd in others, and could therefore not resolve to be guilty of in himself ? By postponing these notes a while, things will be as they ought : they will then be confin'd to that which is their proper subject, explanation alone, intermix'd with some little criticism ; and instead of long quotations, which would otherwise have appear'd in them, the *School of Shakspeare* will be referr'd to occasionally ; and one of the many indexes with which this same *School* will be provided, will afford an ampler and truer Glossary than can be made out of any other matter. In the mean while, and 'till such time as the whole can be got ready, and their way clear'd for them by publication of the book above mention'd, the reader will please to take in good part some few of these notes with which he will be pre-

sented by and by: they were written at least four years ago, with intention of placing them at the head of the several notes that are design'd for each play; but are now detach'd from their fellows, and made parcel of the Introduction, in compliance with some friends' opinion; who having given them a perusal, will needs have it, that 'tis expedient the world should be made acquainted forthwith—in what sort of reading the poor poet himself, and his editor after him, have been unfortunately immers'd.

This discourse is run out, we know not how, into greater heap of leaves than was any ways thought of, and has perhaps fatigu'd the reader equally with the penner of it: yet can we not dismiss him, nor lay down our pen, 'till one article more has been enquir'd into, which seems no less proper for the discussion of this place, than one which we have inserted before, beginning at p. 333; as we there ventur'd to stand up in the behalf of some of the quarto's and maintain their authenticity, so mean we to have the hardiness here to defend some certain plays in this collection from the attacks of a number of writers who have thought fit to call in question their genuineness: the plays contested are—*The Three Parts of Henry VI.*; *Love's Labour's Lost*; *The Taming of the Shrew*; and *Titus Andronicus*; and the sum of what is brought against them, so far at least as is hitherto come to knowledge, may be all ultimately resolv'd into the sole opinion of their unworthiness, exclusive of some weak surmises which do not deserve a notice: it is therefore fair and allowable, by all laws of duelling, to oppose opinion to opinion; which if we can strengthen with reasons, and something

like proofs, which are totally wanting on the other side, the last opinion may chance to carry the day.

To begin then with the first of them, the *Henry VI.* in three parts. We are quite in the dark as to when the first part was written; but sould be apt to conjecture, that it was some considerable time after the other two; and, perhaps, when those two were re-touch'd, and made a little fitter than they are in their first draught to rank with the author's other plays which he has fetch'd from our English history: and those two parts, even with all their re-touchings, being still much inferior to the other plays of that class, he may reasonably be suppos'd to have underwrit himself on purpose in the first, that it might the better match with those it belong'd to: now that these two plays (the first draughts of them, at least,) are among his early performances, we know certainly from their date; which is further confirm'd by the two concluding lines of his *Henry V.* spoken by the Chorus; and (possibly) it were not going too far, to imagine—that they are his second attempt in history, and near in time to his original *King John*, which is also in two parts: and, if this be so, we may safely pronounce them his, and even highly worthy of him; it being certain, that there was no English play upon the stage, at that time, which can come at all in competition with them; and this probably it was, which procur'd them the good reception that is mention'd too in the Chorus. The plays we are now speaking of have been inconceivably mangl'd either in the copy or the press, or perhaps both: yet this may be discover'd in them,—that the alterations made afterwards by

the author are nothing near so considerable as those in some other plays; the incidents, the characters, every principal outline in short being the same in both draughts; so that what we shall have occasion to say of the second, may, in some degree, and without much violence, be apply'd also to the first: and this we presume to say of it;—that, low as it must be set in comparison with his other plays, it has beauties in it, and grandeurs, of which no other author was capable but Shakspeare only: that extreemly-affecting scene of the death of young Rutland, that of his father which comes next it, and of Clifford the murtherer of them both; Beaufort's dreadful exit, the exit of King Henry, and a scene of wondrous simplicity and wondrous tenderness united, in which that Henry is made a speaker, while his last decisive battle is fighting,—are as so many stamps upon these plays; by which his property is mark'd, and himself declar'd the owner of them, beyond controversy as we think: and though we have selected these passages only, and recommended them to observation, it had been easy to name abundance of others which bear his mark as strongly: and one circumstance there is that runs through all the three plays, by which he is as surely to be known as by any other that can be thought of; and that is,—the preservation of character: all the personages in them are distinctly and truly delineated, and the character given them sustain'd uniformly throughout; the enormous Richard's particularly, which in the third of these plays is seen rising towards it's zenith: and who sees not the future monster, and acknowledges at the same time the pen that drew it, in these two lines only, spoken over a king who lies stab'd before him,—

“ What, will the aspiring blood of Lancaster
 “ Sink in the ground? I thought, it would have
 mounted.”

let him never pretend discernment hereafter in any case of this nature.

It is hard to persuade one's self, that the objectors to the play which comes next are indeed serious in their opinion; for if he is not visible in *Love's Labour's Lost*, we know not in which of his comedies he can be said to be so: the ease and sprightliness of the dialogue in very many parts of it; it's quick turns of wit, and the humour it abounds in; and (chiefly) in those truly comick characters, the pedant and his companion, the page, the constable, Costard, and Armado,—seem more than sufficient to prove Shakspeare the author of it: and for the blemishes of this play, we must seek the true cause in it's antiquity; which we may venture to carry higher than 1598, the date of it's first impression: rime, when this play appear'd, was thought a beauty of the drama, and heard with singular pleasure by an audience who but a few years before had been accustom'd to all rime; and the measure we call dogrel, and are so much offended with, had no such effect upon the ears of that time: but whether blemishes or no, however this matter be which we have brought to exculpate him, neither of these articles can with any face of justice be alledg'd against *Love's Labour's Lost*, seeing they are both to be met with in several other plays, the genuineness of which has not been question'd by any one. And one thing more shall be observ'd in the behalf of this play;—that the author himself was so little displeas'd at least with some parts of it, that he has brought them a second

time upon the stage ; for who may not perceive that his famous Benedick and Beatrice are but little more than the counter-parts of Biron and Rosaline? All which circumstances consider'd, and that especially of the writer's childhood (as it may be term'd) when this comedy was produc'd, we may confidently pronounce it his true offspring, and replace it amongst it's brethren.

That the *Taming of the Shrew* should ever have been put into this class of plays, and adjudg'd a spurious one, may justly be reckon'd wonderful, when we consider it's merit, and the reception it has generally met with in the world : it's success at first, and the esteem it was then held in, induc'd Fletcher to enter the lists with it in another play, in which Petruchio is humbl'd and Catharine triumphant ; and we have it in his works, under the title of "*The Woman's Prize, or, the Tamer tam'd :*" but, by an unhappy mistake of buffoonery for humour and obscenity for wit, which was not uncommon with that author, his production came lamely off, and was soon consign'd to the oblivion in which it is now bury'd ; whereas this of his antagonist flourishes still, and has maintain'd its place upon the stage (in some shape or other) from its very first appearance down to the present hour : and this success it has merited, by true wit and true humour ; a fable of very artful construction, much business, and highly interesting ; and by natural and well-sustain'd characters, which no pen but Shakspeare's was capable of drawing : what defects it has, are chiefly in the diction ; the same (indeed) with those of the play that was last-mention'd, and to be accounted for the same way : for we are strongly inclin'd to believe it a neighbour in time to *Love's Labour's Lost*, though we

want the proofs of it which we have luckily for that.²

But the plays which we have already spoke of are but slightly attack'd, and by few writers, in comparison of this which we are now come to of "*Titus Andronicus*;" commentators, editors, every one (in short) who has had to do with Shakspeare, unite all in condemning it,—as a very bundle of horrors, totally unfit for the stage, and unlike the poet's manner, and even the style of his other pieces; all which allegations are extremely true, and we readily admit of them, but can not admit the conclusion—that, therefore, it is not his; and shall now proceed to give the reasons of our dissent, but (first) the play's age must be enquir'd into. In the Induction to Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, which was written in the year 1614, the audience is thus accosted:—"Hee that will sweare, *Jeronimo*, or *Andronicus* are the best playes, yet, shall passe unexcepted at, heere, as a man whose judgement shewes it is constant, and hath stood still, these five and twentie, or thirty yeeres. Though it be an *ignorance*, it is a vertuous and stay'd ignorance; and next to *truth*, a confirm'd error does well; such a one the *author* knowes where to finde him." We have here the great Ben himself, joining this play with *Jeronimo, or, the Spanish Tragedy*, and bearing express testimony to the credit

² The authenticity of this play stands further confirm'd by the testimony of Sir Aston Cockayn; a writer who came near to Shakspeare's time, and does expressly ascribe it to him in an epigram address'd to Mr. Clement Fisher of Wincot; but it is (perhaps,) superfluous, and of but little weight neither, as it will be said—that Sir Aston proceeds only upon the evidence of it's being in print in his name: we do therefore lay no great stress upon it, nor shall insert the epigram; it will be found in *The School of Shakspeare*, which is the proper place for things of that sort.

they were both in with the publick at the time they were written ; but this is by the by ; to ascertain that time, was the chief reason for inserting the quotation, and there we see it fix'd to twenty-five or thirty years prior to this Induction : now it is not necessary, to suppose that Jonson speaks in this place with exact precision ; but allowing that he does, the first of these periods carries us back to 1589, a date not very repugnant to what is afterwards advanc'd : Langbaine, in his *Account of the English dramatick Poets*, under the article—SHAKSPEARE, does expressly tell us,—that “ *Andronicus* was first printed in 1594, quarto, and acted by the Earls of Derby, Pembroke, and Essex, their servants ;” and though the edition is not now to be met with, and he who mentions it be no exact writer, nor greatly to be rely'd on in many of his articles, yet in this which we have quoted he is so very particular that one can hardly withhold assent to it ; especially, as this account of it's printing coincides well enough with Jonson's æra of writing this play ; to which therefore we subscribe, and go on upon that ground. The books of that time afford strange examples of the barbarism of the publick taste both upon the stage and elsewhere : a conceited one of John Lilly's set the whole nation a madding ; and, for a while, every pretender to politeness “ parl'd Euphuism,” as it was phras'd, and no writings would go down with them but such as were pen'd in that fantastical manner : the setter-up of this fashion try'd it also in comedy ; but seems to have miscarry'd in that, and for this plain reason : the people who govern theatres are, the middle and lower orders of the world ; and these expected laughter in comedies, which this stuff of Lilly's was incapable of exci-

ting: but some other writers, who rose exactly at that time, succeeded better in certain tragical performances, though as outrageous to the full in their way, and as remote from nature, as these comick ones of Lilly; for falling in with that innate love of blood which has been often objected to British audiences, and choosing fables of horror which they made horrider still by their manner of handling them, they produc'd a set of monsters that are not to be parallel'd in all the annals of play-writing; yet they were receiv'd with applause, and were the favourites of the publick for almost ten years together ending at 1595: many plays of this stamp, it is probable, have perish'd; but those that are come down to us, are as follows;—" *The Wars of Cyrus; Tamburlaine the Great, in two parts; The Spanish Tragedy, likewise in two parts; Soliman and Perseda; and Selimus, a tragedy;*"³ which whoever

³ No evidence has occur'd to prove exactly the time these plays were written, except that passage of Jonson's which relates to *Jeronimo*; but the editions we have read them in, are as follows: *Tamburlaine* in 1593; *Selimus*, and *The Wars of Cyrus*, in 1594; and *Soliman and Perseda*, in 1599; the other without a date, but as early as the earliest: they are also without a name of author; nor has any book been met with to instruct us in that particular, except only for *Jeronimo*; which we are told by Heywood, in his *Apology for Actors*, was written by Thomas Kyd; author, or translator rather, (for it is taken from the French of Robert Garnier,) of another play, intitl'd—*Cornelia*, printed likewise in 1594. Which of these extravagant plays had the honour to lead the way, we can't tell, but *Jeronimo* seems to have the best pretensions to it; as *Selimus* has above all his other brethren, to bearing away the palm for blood and murder: this curious piece has these lines for a conclusion:—

"If this first part Gentles, do like you well,

"The second part, shall greater murthers tell."

but whether the audience had enough of it, or how it has happen'd we can't tell, but no such second part is to be found. All these plays were the constant butt of the poets who came imme-

has means of coming at, and can have patience to examine, will see evident tokens of a fashion then prevailing, which occasion'd all these plays to be cast in the same mold. Now, Shakspeare, whatever motives he might have in some other parts of it, at this period of his life wrote certainly for profit; and seeing it was to be had in this way, (and this way only, perhaps,) he fell in with the current, and gave his sorry auditors a piece to their tooth in this contested play of *Titus Andronicus*; which as it came out at the same time with the plays above-mention'd, is most exactly like them in almost every particular; their very numbers, consisting all of ten syllables with hardly any redundant, are copy'd by this Proteus, who could put on any shape that either serv'd his interest or suited his inclination: and this, we hope, is a fair and unforc'd way of accounting for "*Andronicus*;" and may convince the most prejudic'd—that Shakspeare might be the writer of it; as he might also of *Lochrine* which is ascrib'd to him, a ninth tragedy, in form and time agreeing perfectly with the others. But to conclude this article,—However he may be censur'd as rash or ill-judging, the editor ventures to declare—that he himself wanted not the conviction of the foregoing argument to be satisfy'd who the play belongs to; for though a work of imitation, and conforming itself to models truly execrable throughout, yet the genius of its author breaks forth in some places, and, to the editor's eye, Shakspeare stands confess'd: the third act in particular may be read with admiration even

diately after them, and of Shakspeare amongst the rest; and by their ridicule the town at last was made sensible of their ill judgment, and the theatre was purg'd of these monsters.

by the most delicate ; who, if they are not without feelings, may chance to find themselves touch'd by it with such passions as tragedy should excite, that is—terror, and pity. The reader will please to observe—that all these contested plays are in the folio, which is dedicated to the poet's patrons and friends, the earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, by editors who are seemingly honest men, and profess themselves dependant upon those noblemen ; to whom therefore they would hardly have had the confidence to present forgeries, and pieces supposititious ; in which too they were liable to be detected by those identical noble persons themselves, as well as by a very great part of their other readers and auditors : which argument, though of no little strength in itself, we omitted to bring before, as having better (as we thought) and more forcible to offer ; but it had behov'd those gentlemen who have question'd the plays to have got rid of it in the first instance, as it lies full in their way in the very entrance upon this dispute.

We shall close this part of the Introduction with some observations, that were reserv'd for this place, upon that paragraph of the player editors' preface which is quoted at p. 330 ; and then taking this further liberty with the reader,—to call back his attention to some particulars that concern the present edition, dismiss him to be entertain'd (as we hope) by a sort of appendix, consisting of those notes that have been mention'd, in which the true and undoubted originals of almost all the poet's fables are clearly pointed out. But first of the preface. Besides the authenticity of all the several pieces that make up this collection, and their care in publishing them, both solemnly affirm'd in the paragraph refer'd to, we there find these honest

editors acknowledging in terms equally solemn the author's right in his copies, and lamenting that he had not exercis'd that right by a publication of them during his life-time; and from the manner in which they express themselves, we are strongly inclin'd to think—that he had really form'd such a design, but towards his last days, and too late to put it in execution: a collection of Jonson's was at that instant in the press, and upon the point of coming forth; which might probably inspire such a thought into him and his companions, and produce conferences between them—about a similar publication from him, and the pieces that should compose it, which the poet might make a list of. It is true, this is only a supposition; but a supposition arising naturally, as we think, from the incident that has been mention'd, and the expressions of his fellow players and editors: and, if suffer'd to pass for truth, here is a good and sound reason for the exclusion of all those other plays that have been attributed to him upon some grounds or other;—he himself has proscrib'd them; and we cannot forbear hoping, that they will in no future time rise up against him, and be thrust into his works; a disavowal of weak and idle pieces, the productions of green years, wantonness, or inattention, is a right that all authors are vested with; and should be exerted by all, if their reputation is dear to them; had Jonson us'd it, his character had stood higher than it does. But, after all, they who have pay'd attention to this truth are not always secure; the indiscreet zeal of an admirer, or avarice of a publisher, has frequently added things that dishonour them; and where realities have been wanting, forgeries supply the place; thus has Homer his *Hymns*, and the poor *Mantuan* his *Ciris*

and his *Culex*. Noble and great authors demand all our veneration: where their wills can be discover'd, they ought sacredly to be comply'd with; and that editor ill discharges his duty, who presumes to load them with things they have renounc'd: it happens but too often, that we have other ways to shew our regard to them; their own great want of care in their copies, and the still greater want of it that is commonly in their impressions, will find sufficient exercise for any one's friendship, who may wish to see their works set forth in that perfection which was intended by the author. And this friendship we have endeavour'd to shew to Shakspeare in the present edition: the plan of it has been lay'd before the reader; upon whom it rests to judge finally of its goodness, as well as how it is executed: but as several matters have interven'd that may have driven it from his memory; and we are desirous above all things to leave a strong impression upon him of one merit which it may certainly pretend to, that is—it's fidelity; we shall take leave to remind him, at parting, that—Throughout all this work, what is added without the authority of some ancient edition, is printed in a black letter: what alter'd, and what thrown out, constantly taken notice of; some few times in a note, where the matter was long, or of a complex nature;⁴ but, more generally, at the

⁴ The particulars that could not well be pointed out below, according to the general method, or otherwise than by a note, are of three sorts;—omissions, any thing large; transpositions; and such differences of punctuation as produce great changes in the sense of a passage: instances of the first occur in *Love's Labour's Lost*, p. 54, and in *Troilus and Cressida*, p. 109 and 117; of the second, in *The Comedy of Errors*, p. 62, and in *Richard III.* p. 92, and 102; and *The Tempest*, p. 69, and *King*

bottom of the page ; where what is put out of the text, how minute and insignificant soever, is always to be met with; what alter'd, as constantly set down, and in the proper words of that edition upon which the alteration is form'd : and, even in authoriz'd readings, whoever is desirous of knowing further, what edition is follow'd preferably to the others, may be gratify'd too in that, by consulting the Various Readings; which are now finish'd; and will be publish'd, together with the Notes, in some other volumes, with all the speed that is convenient.

ORIGIN OF SHAKSPEARE'S FABLES.

All's well that ends well.

The fable of this play is taken from a novel, of which Boccace is the original author; in whose *Decameron* it may be seen at p. 97.^b of the Giunti edition, reprinted at London. But it is more than probable, that Shakspeare read it in a book, call'd *The Palace of Pleasure*: which is a collection of novels translated from other authors, made by one William Painter, and by him first publish'd in the years 1565 and 67, in two tomes, quarto; the novel now spoken of, is the thirty-eighth of tome the first. This novel is a meagre translation, not (perhaps)

Lear, p. 53, afford instances of the last; as may be seen by looking into any modern edition, where all those passages stand nearly as in the old ones.

[All these references are to Mr. Capell's own edition of our author.]

immediately from Boccace, but from a French translator of him: as the original is in every body's hands, it may there be seen—that nothing is taken from it by Shakspeare, but some leading incidents of the serious part of his play.

Antony and Cleopatra.

This play, together with *Coriolanus*, *Julius Cæsar*, and some part of *Timon of Athens*, are form'd upon Plutarch's *Lives*, in the articles—*Coriolanus*, *Brutus*, *Julius Cæsar*, and *Antony*: of which lives there is a French translation, of great fame, made by Amiot, Bishop of Auxerre and great almoner of France; which, some few years after it's first appearance, was put into an English dress by our countryman Sir Thomas North, and publish'd in the year 1579, in folio. As the language of this translation is pretty good, for the time; and the sentiments, which are Plutarch's, breathe the genuine spirit of the several historical personages; Shakspeare has, with much judgment, introduc'd no small number of speeches into these plays, in the very words of that translator, turning them into verse: which he has so well wrought up, and incorporated with his plays, that, what he has introduc'd, cannot be discover'd by any reader, 'till it is pointed out for him.

As you like it.

A novel, or (rather) pastoral romance, intitl'd—*Euphues's Golden Legacy*, written in a very fantastical style by Dr. Thomas Lodge, and by him first publish'd in the year 1590, in quarto, is the foun-

dation of *As you like it*: besides the fable, which is pretty exactly follow'd, the outlines of certain principal characters may be observ'd in the novel: and some expressions of the novelist (few, indeed, and of no great moment,) seem to have taken possession of Shakspeare's memory, and from thence crept into his play.

Comedy of Errors.

Of this play, the *Menæchmi* of Plautus is most certainly the original: yet the poet went not to the Latin for it; but took up with an English *Menæchmi*, put out by one W. W. in 1595, quarto. This translation,—in which the writer professes to have us'd some liberties, which he has distinguish'd by a particular mark,—is in prose, and a very good one for the time: it furnish'd Shakspeare with nothing but his principal incident; as you may in part see by the translator's argument, which is in verse, and runs thus:

“ Two twinborne sonnes, a Sicill marchant had,
 “ Menechmus one, and Sosicles the other;
 “ The first his father lost a little lad,
 “ The grandsire namde the latter like his brother:
 “ This (growne a man) long travell tooke to seeke,
 “ His brother, and to Epidamnum came,
 “ Where th' other dwelt inricht, and him so like,
 “ That citizens there take him for the same;
 “ Father, wife, neighbours, each mistaking either,
 “ Much pleasant error, ere they meete together.”

It is probable, that the last of these verses suggested the title of Shakspeare's play.

Cymbeline.

Boccace's story of *Bernardo da Ambrogivolo*, (Day 2, Nov. 9,) is generally suppos'd to have furnish'd Shakspeare with the fable of *Cymbeline*: but the embracers of this opinion seem not to have been aware, that many of that author's novels (translated, or imitated,) are to be found in English books, prior to, or contemporary with, Shakspeare: and of this novel in particular, there is an imitation extant in a story-book of that time, intitl'd—*Westward for Smelts*: it is the second tale in the book: the scene, and the actors of it are different from Boccace, as Shakspeare's are from both; but the main of the story is the same in all. We may venture to pronounce it a book of those times, and that early enough to have been us'd by Shakspeare, as I am persuaded it was; though the copy that I have of it, is no older than 1620; it is a quarto pamphlet of only five sheets and a half, printed in a black letter: some reasons for my opinion are given in another place; (v. *Winter's Tale*) though perhaps they are not necessary, as it may one day better be made appear a true one, by the discovery of some more ancient edition.

Hamlet.

About the middle of the sixteenth century, Francis de Belleforest, a French gentleman, entertain'd his countrymen with a collection of novels, which he intitles—*Histoires Tragiques*; they are in part originals, part translations, and chiefly from Bandello: he began to publish them in the year

1564; and continu'd his publication successively in several tomes, how many I know not; the dedication to his fifth tome is dated six years after. In that tome, the *troisieme Histoire* has this title; “*Avec quelle ruse Amleth, qui depuis fut roy de Dannemarch, vengea la mort de son pere Horvuendille, occis par Fengon son frere, & autre occurrence de son histoire.*” Painter, who has been mention'd before, compil'd his *Palace of Pleasure* almost entirely from Belleforest, taking here and there a novel as pleas'd him, but he did not translate the whole: other novels, it is probable, were translated by different people, and publish'd singly; this, at least, that we are speaking of, was so, and is intitl'd—*The Historie of Hamblet*; it is in quarto, and black letter: there can be no doubt made, by persons who are acquainted with these things, that the translation is not much younger than the French original; though the only edition of it, that is yet come to my knowledge, is no earlier than 1608: that Shakspeare took his play from it, there can likewise be very little doubt.

1 *Henry IV.*

In the eleven plays that follow,—*Macbeth*, *King John*, *Richard II.* *Henry IV.* two parts, *Henry V.* *Henry VI.* three parts, *Richard III.* and *Henry VIII.*—the historians of that time, Hall, Holinshed, Stow, and others, (and, in particular, Holinshed,) are pretty closely follow'd; and that not only for their matter, but even sometimes in their expressions: the harangue of the Archbishop of Canterbury in *Henry V.* that of Queen Catharine in *Henry VIII.* at her trial, and the king's reply to it, are taken from those chroniclers, and put into

verse: other lesser matters are borrow'd from them; and so largely scatter'd up and down in these plays, that whoever would rightly judge of the poet, must acquaint himself with those authors, and his character will not suffer in the enquiry.

Richard III. was preceded by other plays written upon the same subject; concerning which, see the conclusion of a note in this Introduction, at p. 332. And as to *Henry V.*—it may not be improper to observe in this place, that there is extant another old play, call'd *The famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, printed in 1617, quarto; perhaps by some tricking bookseller, who meant to impose it upon the world for Shakspeare's, who dy'd the year before. This play, which opens with that prince's wildness and robberies before he came to the crown, and so comprehends something of the story of both parts of *Henry IV.* as well as of *Henry V.*—is a very medley of nonsense and ribaldry; and, it is my firm belief, was prior to Shakspeare's *Henries*; and the identical “displeasing play” mention'd in the epilogue to 2 *Henry IV.*; for that such a play should be written after his, or receiv'd upon any stage, has no face of probability. There is a character in it, call'd—Sir John Oldcastle; who holds there the place of Sir John Falstaff, but his very antipodes in every other particular, for it is all dullness: and it is to this character that Shakspeare alludes, in those much-disputed passages; one in his *Henry IV.* p. 194, and the other in the epilogue to his second part; where the words “for Oldcastle dy'd a martyr” hint at this miserable performance, and it's fate, which was—damnation.

King Lear.

Lear's distressful story has been often told in poems, ballads, and chronicles: but to none of these are we indebted for Shakspeare's *Lear*; but to a silly old play which first made its appearance in 1605, the title of which is as follows:—"The | True Chronicle Hi- | story of King LEIR, and his three | daughters, *Gonorill, Ragan, | and Cordella.* As it hath bene divers and sundry | times lately acted. | LONDON, | Printed by Simon Stafford for John | Wright, and are to bee sold at his shop at | Christes Church dore, next Newgate- | Market. 1605. (4° I. 4^b.)—As it is a great curiosity, and very scarce, the title is here inserted at large: and for the same reason, and also to shew the use that Shakspeare made of it, some extracts will now be added.

The author of this *Leir* has kept him close to the chronicles; for he ends his play with the reinstating King Leir in his throne, by the aid of Cordella and her husband. But take the entire fable in his own words. Towards the end of the play, at signature H 3, you find Leir in France: upon whose coast he and his friend Perillus are landed in so necessitous a condition, that, having nothing to pay their passage, the mariners take their cloaks, leaving them their jerkins in exchange: thus attir'd, they go up further into the country; and there, when they are at the point to perish by famine, insomuch that Perillus offers Leir his arm to feed upon, they light upon Gallia and his queen, whom the author has brought down thitherward, in progress, disguis'd. Their discourse is overheard by Cordella, who immediately knows them; but,

at her husband's persuasion, forbears to discover herself a while, relieves them with food, and then asks their story; which Leir gives her in these words:

" *Leir.* Then know this first, I am a Brittain borne,
 " And had three daughters by one loving wife:
 " And though I say it, of beauty they were sped;
 " Especially the youngest of the three,
 " For her perfections hardly matcht could be:
 " On these I doted with a jealous love,
 " And thought to try which of them lov'd me best,
 " By asking of them, which would do most for me?
 " The first and second flatt'ed me with words,
 " And vowd they lov'd me better then their lives:
 " The youngest sayd, she lov'd me as a child
 " Might do: her answer I esteem'd most vild,
 " And presently in an ouragious mood,
 " I turnd her from me to go sinke or swym;
 " And all I had, even to the very clothes,
 " I gave in dowry with the other two:
 " And she that best deserv'd the greatest share,
 " I gave her nothing, but disgrace and care.
 " Now mark the sequell: When I had done thus,
 " I sojournd in my eldest daughters house,
 " Where for a time I was intreated well,
 " And liv'd in state sufficing my content:
 " But every day her kindnesse did grow cold,
 " Which I with patience put up well ynough
 " And seemed not to see the things I saw:
 " But at the last she grew so far incenst
 " With moody fury, and with causelesse hate,
 " That in most vild and contumelious termes,
 " She bade me pack, and harbour some where else
 " Then was I fayne for refuge to repayre
 " Unto my other daughter for reliefe,
 " Who gave me pleasing and most courteous word's;
 " But in her actions shewed her selfe so sore,
 " As never any daughter did before:
 " She prayd me in a morning out betime,
 " To go to a thicket two miles from the court,
 " Poynting that there she would come talke with me:
 " There she had set a shaghayrd murdring wretch,

" To massacre my honest friend and me.
 * * * * *
 " And now I am constrain'd to seeke reliefe
 " Of her to whom I have bin so unkind ;
 " Whose censure, if it do award me death,
 " I must confesse she payes me but my due :
 " But if she shew a loving daughters part,
 " It comes of God and her, not my desert.
 " *Cor.* No doubt she will, I dare be sworne she will."

Thereupon ensues her discovery ; and, with it, a circumstance of some beauty, which Shakspeare has borrow'd—(v. *Lear*, p. 565,) their kneeling to each other, and mutually contending which should ask forgiveness. The next page presents us Gallia, and Mumford who commands under him, marching to embarque their forces, to re-instate Leir ; and the next, a sea-port in Britain, and officers setting a watch, who are to fire a beacon to give notice if any ships approach, in which there is some low humour that is passable enough. Gallia and his forces arrive, and take the town by surprize : immediately upon which, they are encounter'd by the forces of the two elder sisters, and their husbands : a battle ensues : Leir conquers ; he and his friends enter victorious, and the play closes thus :—

" Thanks (worthy Mumford) to thee last of all,
 " Not greeted last, 'cause thy desert was small ;
 " No, thou hast lion-like lay'd on to-day,
 " Chasing the Cornwall King and Cambria ;
 " Who with my daughters, daughters did I say ?
 " To save their lives, the fugitives did play.
 " Come, sonne and daughter, who did nie advance,
 " Repose with me awhile, and then for Fraunce."
 [*Exeunt.*]

Such is the *Leir*, now before us. Who the author of it should be, I cannot surmise ; for neither

in manner nor style has it the least resemblance to any of the other tragedies of that time: most of them rise now and then, and are poetical; but this creeps in one dull tenour, from beginning to end, after the specimen here inserted: it should seem he was a Latinist, by the translation following:

“ Feare not, my lord, the perfit good indeed,
 “ Can never be corrupted by the bad;
 “ A new fresh vessell still retaynes the taste
 “ Of that which first is powr'd into the same:” [sign. H.

But whoever he was, Shakspeare has done him the honour to follow him in a stroke or two: one has been observ'd upon above; and the reader, who is acquainted with Shakspeare's *Lear*, will perceive another in the second line of the concluding speech: and here is a third; “ Knowest thou these letters?” says Leir to Ragan, (sign. I. 3^b.) shewing her hers and her sister's letters commanding his death; upon which, she snatches at the letters, and tears them: (v. *Lear*, p. 590, 591,) another, and that a most signal one upon one account, occurs at signature C 3^b:

“ But he, the myrrour of mild patience,
 “ Puts up all wrongs, and never gives reply:”

Perillus says this of Leir; comprizing therein his character, as drawn by this author: how opposite to that which Shakspeare has given him, all know; and yet he has found means to put nearly the same words into the very mouth of his *Lear*,—

“ No, I will be the pattern of all patience,
 “ I will say nothing.”

Lastly, two of Shakspeare's personages, Kent, and the Steward, seem to owe their existence to the above-mention'd "shag-hair'd wretch," and the Perillus of this *Leir*.

The episode of Gloster and his two sons is taken from the *Arcadia*: in which romauce there is a chapter thus intitl'd;—"The pitifull state, and storie of the Paphlagonian unkinde King, and his kind sonne, first related by the son, then by the blind father." (*Arcadia*, p. 142, edit. 1590, 4to.) of which episode there are no traces in either chronicle, poem, or play, wherein this history is handl'd.

Love's Labour's Lost.

The fable of this play does not seem to be a work entirely of invention; and I am apt to believe, that it owes its birth to some novel or other, which may one day be discover'd. The character of Armado has some resemblance to Don Quixote; but the play is older than that work of Cervantes: of Holofernes, another singular character, there are some faint traces in a masque of Sir Philip Sidney's that was presented before Queen Elizabeth at Wansted: this masque, call'd in catalogues—*The Lady of May*, is at the end of that author's works, edit. 1627. folio.

Measure for Measure.

In the year 1578, was publish'd in a black-letter quarto a miserable dramattick performance, in two parts, intitl'd—*Promos and Cassandra*; written by one George Whetstone, author likewise of the *Heptameron*, and much other poetry of the same

stamp, printed about that time. These plays their author, perhaps, might form upon a novel of Cinthio's; (v. Dec. 8, Nov. 5,) which Shakspeare went not to, but took up with Whetstone's fable, as is evident from the argument of it; which, though it be somewhat of the longest, yet take it in his own words.

“ The Argument of the whole
Historye.

“ In the Cyttie of Julio (sometimes under the dominion of Corvinus Kinge of Hungarie and Boemia) there was a law, that what man so ever committed adultery, should lose his head, & the woman offender, should weare some disguised apparel, during her life, to make her infamously noted. This severe lawe, by the favour of some mercifull magistrate, became little regarded, untill the time of Lord Promos aucturity: who convicting, a yong gentleman named Andrugio of incontinency, condemned, both him, and his minion to the execution of this statute. Andrugio had a very vertuous, and beautiful gentlewoman to his sister, named Cassandra: Cassandra to enlarge her brothers life, submitted an humble petition to the Lord Promos: Promos regarding her good behaviours, and fantasying her great beawtie, was much delighted with the sweete order of her talke: and doying good, that evill might come thereof: for a time, he repriv'd her brother: but wicked man, touning his liking unto unlawfull lust, he set downe the spoile of her honour, raunsome for her Brothers life: Chaste Cassandra, abhorring both him and his sute, by no perswasion would yeald to

this raunsome. But in fine, wonne with the importunitye of hir brother (pleading for life :) upon these conditions she agreed to Promos. First that he should pardon her brother, and after marry her. Promos as fearles in promise, as carelesse in performance, with sollemne vowe, sygnd her conditions: but worse than any Iniydel, his will satisfied, he performed neither the one nor the other: for to keepe his authoritye, unspotted with favour, and to prevent Cassandraes clamors, he commaunded the Gayler secretly, to present Cassandra with her brother's head. The Gayler, with the outcryes of Andrugio, (abhorryng Promos lewdnes,) by the providence of God, provided thus for his safety. He presented Cassandra with a felons head newlie executed, who, (being mangled, knew it not from her brothers, by the Gayler, who wasset at libertie) was so agreed at this trecherye, that at the pointe to kyl her selfe, she spared that stroke, to be avenged of Promos. And devysing a way, she concluded, to make her fortunes knowne unto the kinge. She (executing this resolution) was so highly favoured of the King, that forthwith he hasted to do justice on Promos: whose judgement was, to marrye Cassandra, to repaire her crased Honour: which donne, for his hainous offence he should lose his head. This maryage solemprised, Cassandra tyed in the greatest bondes of affection to her husband, became an earnest suter for his life: the Kinge (tendringe the generall benefit of the cōmon weale, before her special case, although he favoured her much) would not graunt her sute. Andrugio (disguised amonge the company) sorrowing the grieffe of his sister, bewrayde his safety, and craved pardon. The Kinge, to renoune the vertues of Cassandra, pardoned both

him, and Promos. The circumstances of this rare Historye, in action livelye foloweth."

The play itself opens thus:—

“ Actus I. Scena 1.

“ Promos, Mayor, Shirife, Sworde bearer: One with a bunche of keyes: Phallax, Promos man.

- “ You Officers which now in Julio stay,
 “ Knowe you our leadge, the Kinge of Hungarie:
 “ Sent me Promos, to iogne with you in way:
 “ That still we may to Justice have an eye.
 “ And now to showe, my rule & powe at lardge,
 “ Attentivelie, his Letters Patents heare:
 “ Phallax reade out my Soberaines chardge,
 “ Phal. As you commande, I will: gibe heedful care.

“ Phallax readeih the Kinges Letiers Patents, which must be fayre written in parchment, with some great counterfeat zeale.

- “ Pro. Loe, here you see what is our Soberaignes wyl,
 “ Loe, heare his wish, that right, not might, beare swage.
 “ Loe, heare his care, to weed from good the yll,
 “ To scourge the wights, good Lawes that disobay.”

And thus it proceeds; without one word in it, that Shakspeare could make use of, or can be read with patience by any man living: and yet, besides the characters appearing in the argument, his Bawd Clown, Lucio, Juliet, and the Provost, nay, and even his Barnardine, are created out of hints which this play gave him; and the lines too that are quoted, bad as they are, suggested to him the manner in which his own play opens.

Merchant of Venice.

The *Jew of Venice* was a story exceedingly well known in Shakspeare's time; celebrated in ballads; and taken (perhaps) originally from an Italian book

intitl'd—*Il Pecorone*: the author of which calls himself,—Ser Giovanni Fiorentino; and writ his book, as he tells you in some humorous verses at the beginning of it, in 1378, three years after the death of Boccace; it is divided into *giornata's*, and the story we are speaking of is in the first novel of the *giornata quarta*; edit. 1565, octavo, in *Vinegia*. This novel Shakspeare certainly read; either in the original, or (which I rather think) in some translation that is not now to be met with, and form'd his play upon it. It was translated anew, and made publick in 1755, in a small octavo pamphlet, printed for M. Cooper: and, at the end of it, a novel of Boccace; (the first of day the tenth) which, as the translator rightly judges, might possibly produce the scene of the caskets, substituted by the poet in place of one in the other novel, that was not proper for the stage.

Merry Wives of Windsor.

“Queen Elizabeth,” says a writer of Shakspeare’s life, “was so well pleas’d with that admirable character of Falstaff, in the two parts of *Henry the Fourth*, that she commanded him to continue it for one play more, and to shew him in love. This is said to be the occasion of his writing *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.” As there is no proof brought for the truth of this story, we may conclude—that it is either some playhouse tradition, or had its rise from Sir William D’Avenant, whose authority the writer quotes for another singular anecdote, relating to lord Southampton. Be this as it may; Shakspeare, in the conduct of Falstaff’s love-adventures, made use of some incidents in a book that has been mention’d before, call’d—*Il Pecorone*; they are in

the second novel of that book. It is highly probable, that this novel likewise is in an old English dress somewhere or other; and from thence transplanted into a foolish book, call'd—*The fortunate, the deceiv'd, and the unfortunate Lovers*; printed in 1685, octavo, for William Whittwood; where the reader may see it, at p. 1. Let me add too, that there is a like story in the—“*Piacevoli Notti, di Straparola, libro primo*; at *Notte quarta, Favola quarta*; edit. 1567, octavo, in *Vinegia*.

Midsummer-Night's Dream.

The history of our old poets is so little known, and the first editions of their works become so very scarce, that it is hard pronouncing any thing certain about them: but, if that pretty fantastical poem of Drayton's, call'd—*Nymphidia, or The Court of Fairy*, be early enough in time, (as, I believe, it is; for I have seen an edition of that author's pastorals, printed in 1593, quarto,) it is not improbable, that Shakspeare took from thence the hint of his fairies: a line of that poem, “Thorough bush, thorough briar,” occurs also in his play. The rest of the play is, doubtless, invention: the names only of Theseus, Hippolita, and Theseus' former loves, Antiopa and others, being historical; and taken from the translated Plutarch, in the article—Theseus.

Much Ado about Nothing.

“*Timbree de Cardōne deviēt amoureux à Messine de Fenicie Leonati, & des divers & estrāges accidens qui advindrēt avāt qu'il l' espousast.*”—is the title of another novel in the *Histoires Tragiques*

of Belleforest; Tom. 3. Hist. 18: it is taken from one of Bandello's, which you may see in his first tome, at p. 150, of the London edition in quarto, a copy from that of Lucca in 1554. This French novel comes the nearest to the fable of *Much Ado about Nothing*, of any thing that has yet been discovered, and is (perhaps) the foundation of it. There is a story something like it in the fifth book of *Orlando Furioso*: (v. Sir John Harrington's translation of it, edit. 1591, folio) and another in Spencer's *Fairy Queen*.

Othello.

Cinthio, the best of the Italian writers next to Boccace, has a novel thus intitl'd:—"Un Capitano Moro piglia per mogliera una cittadina venetiana, un suo Alfieri l'accusa de adulterio al [*read*, il, *with a colon after*—adulterio] Marito, cerca, che l'Alfieri uccida colui, ch'egli credea l'Adultero, il Capitano uccide la Moglie, è accusato dallo Alfieri, non confessa il Moro, ma essendovi chiari inditii, è bandito, Et lo scelerato Alfieri, credendo nuocere ad altri, procaccia à sè la morte miseramente." Hecatommithi, Dec. 3, Nov. 7; edit. 1565, two tomes, octavo. If there was no translation of this novel, French or English; nor any thing built upon it, either in prose or verse, near enough in time for Shakspeare to take his *Othello* from them; we must, I think, conclude—that he had it from the Italian; for the story (at least, in all it's main circumstances) is apparently the same.

Romeo and Juliet.

This very affecting story is likewise a true one; it made a great noise at the time it happen'd, and

was soon taken up by poets and novel-writers. Bandello has one; it is the ninth of tome the second: and there is another, and much better, left us by some anonymous writer; of which I have an edition, printed in 1553 at Venice, one year before Bandello, which yet was not the first. Some small time after, Pierre Boisteau, a French writer, put out one upon the same subject, taken from these Italians, but much alter'd and enlarg'd: this novel, together with five others of Boisteau's penning, Belleforest took; and they now stand at the beginning of his *Histoires Tragiques*, edition before-mention'd. But it had some prior edition; which falling into the hands of a countryman of ours, he converted it into a poem; altering, and adding many things to it of his own, and publish'd it in 1562, without a namé, in a small octavo volume, printed by Richard Tottill; and this poem, which is call'd—*The Tragical Historie of Romeus and Juliet*, is the origin of Shakspeare's play: who not only follows it even minutely in the conduct of his fable, and that in those places where it differs from the other writers; but has also borrow'd from it some few thoughts, and expressions. At the end of a small poetical miscellany, publish'd by one George Turberville in 1570, there is a poem—"On the death of Maister Arthur Brooke drown'd in passing to New-haven;" in which it appears, that this gentleman, (who, it is likely, was a military man,) was the writer of *Romeus and Juliet*. In the second tome of *The Palace of Pleasure*, (Nov. 25.) there is a prose translation of Boisteau's novel; but Shakspeare made no use of it.

Taming of the Shrew.

Nothing has yet been produc'd that is likely to have given the poet occasion for writing this play, neither has it (in truth) the air of a novel, so that we may reasonably suppose it a work of invention; that part of it, I mean, which gives it it's title. For one of it's underwalks, or plots,—to wit, the story of Lucentio, in almost all it's branches, (his love-affair, and the artificial conduct of it; the pleasant incident of the Pedant; and the characters of Vincentio, Tranio, Gremio, and Biondello,) is form'd upon a comedy of George Gascoigne's, call'd—*Supposes*, a translation from Ariosto's *I Suppositi*: which comedy was acted by the gentlemen of Grey's Inn in 1566; and may be seen in the translator's works, of which there are several old editions: and the odd induction of this play is taken from Goulart's *Histoires admirables de notre Temps*; who relates it as a real fact, practis'd upon a mean artisan at Brussels by Philip the good, duke of Burgundy. Goulart was translated into English, by one Edw. Grimeston: the edition I have of it, was printed in 1607, quarto, by George Eld; where this story may be found, at p. 587: but, for any thing that there appears to the contrary, the book might have been printed before.

Tempest.

The *Tempest* has rather more of the novel in it than the play that was last spoken of: but no one has yet pretended to have met with such a novel; nor any thing else, that can be suppos'd to have furnish'd Shakspeare with materials for writing

this play: the fable of which must therefore pass for entirely his own production, 'till the contrary can be made appear by any future discovery. One of the poet's editors, after observing that—the persons of the drama are all Italians; and the unities all regularly observ'd in it, a custom likewise of the Italians; concludes his note with the mention of two of their plays,—*Il Negromante di L. Ariosto*, and *Il Negromante Palliato di Gio. Angelo Petrucci*; one or other of which, he seems to think, may have given rise to the *Tempest*: but he is mistaken in both of them; and the last must needs be out of the question, being later than Shakspeare's time.

Titus Andronicus.

An old ballad, whose date and time of writing can not be ascertain'd, is the ground work of *Titus Andronicus*: the names of the persons acting, and almost every incident of the play are there in miniature:—it is, indeed, so like,—that one might be tempted to suspect, that the ballad was form'd upon the play, and not that upon the ballad; were it not sufficiently known, that almost all the compositions of that sort are prior to even the infancy of Shakspeare.

Troilus and Cressida.

The loves of Troilus and Cressida are celebrated by Chaucer: whose poem might, perhaps, induce Shakspeare to work them up into a play. The other matters of that play (historical, or fabulous, call them which you will,) he had out of an ancient book, written and printed first by Caxton, call'd

—*The Destruction of Troy*, in three parts: in the third part of it, are many strange particulars, occurring no where else, which Shakspeare has admitted into his play.

Twelfth-Night.

Another of Belleforest's novels is thus intitl'd:—
 “Comme une fille Romaine se vestant en page servist long temps un sien amy sans estre cogneue, & depuis l'eut a mary avec autres divers discours.”
Histoires Tragiques; Tom. 4, Hist. 7. This novel, which is itself taken from one of Bandello's (v. Tom. 2, Nov. 36,) is, to all appearance, the foundation of the serious part of *Twelfth-Night*: and must be so accounted; 'till some English novel appears, built (perhaps) upon that French one, but approaching nearer to Shakspeare's comedy.

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

Julia's love-adventures being in some respects the same with those of Viola in *Twelfth-Night*, the same novel might give rise to them both; and Valentine's falling amongst out-laws, and becoming their captain, is an incident that has some resemblance to one in the *Arcadia*, (Book I, chap. 6.) where Pyrocles heads the Helots: all the other circumstances which constitute the fable of this play, are, probably of the poet's own invention.

Winter's Tale.

To the story-book, or *Pleasant History* (as it is call'd) of *Dorastus and Fawnia*, written by Robert

Greene, M. A. we are indebted for Shakspeare's *Winter's Tale*. Greene join'd with Dr. Lodge in writing a play, call'd *A Looking-Glass for London and England*, printed in 1598, in quarto, and black letter; and many of his other works, which are very numerous, were publish'd about that time, and this amongst the rest: it went through many impressions, all of the same form and letter as the play; and that so low down as the year 1664, of which year I have a copy. Upon this occasion, I shall venture to pronounce an opinion, that has been reserv'd for this place, (though other plays too were concern'd in it, as *Hamlet* and *Cymbeline*) which if it be found true, as I believe it will, may be of use to settle many disputed points in literary chronology. My opinion is this:—that almost all books, of the gothick or black character, printed any thing late in the seventeenth century, are in truth only re-impressions; they having pass'd the press before in the preceding century, or (at least) very soon after. For the character began then to be disus'd in the printing of new books: but the types remaining, the owners of them found a convenience in using them for books that had been before printed in them; and to this convenience of theirs are owing all or most of those impressions posterior to 1600. It is left to the reader's sagacity, to apply this remark to the book in the present article; and to those he finds mention'd before, in the articles—*Hamlet* and *Cymbeline*.

Such are the materials, out of which this great poet has rais'd a structure, which no time shall efface, nor any envy be strong enough to lessen the admiration that is so justly due to it; which if it was great before, cannot fail to receive encrease with the judicious, when the account that has been

now given them is reflected upon duly: other originals have, indeed, been pretended; and much extraordinary criticism has, at different times, and by different people, been spun out of those conceits; but, except some few articles in which the writer professes openly his ignorance of the sources they are drawn from, and some others in which he delivers himself doubtfully, what is said in the preceding leaves concerning these fables may with all certainty be rely'd upon.

How much is it to be wish'd, that something equally certain, and indeed worthy to be intitl'd—a Life of Shakspeare, could accompany this relation, and complete the tale of those pieces which the publick is apt to expect before new editions? But that nothing of this sort is at present in being, may be said without breach of candour, as we think, or suspicion of over much niceness: an imperfect and loose account of his father, and family; his own marriage, and the issue of it; some traditional stories,—many of them trifling in themselves, supported by small authority, and seemingly ill-grounded; together with his life's final period as gather'd from his monument, is the full and whole amount of historical matter that is in any of these writings; in which the critick and essayist swallow up the biographer, who yet ought to take the lead in them. The truth is, the occurrences of this most interesting life (we mean, the private ones) are irrecoverably lost to us; the friendly office of registering them was overlook'd by those who alone had it in their power, and our enquiries about them now must prove vain and thrown away. But there is another sort of them that is not quite so hopeless; which besides affording us the prospect of some good issue to our endeavours, do also invite

us to them by the promise of a much better reward for them: the knowledge of his private life had done little more than gratify our curiosity, but his publick one as a writer would have consequences more important; a discovery there would throw a new light upon many of his pieces; and, where rashness only is shew'd in the opinions that are now current about them, a judgment might then be form'd, which perhaps would do credit to the giver of it. When he commenc'd a writer for the stage, and in which play; what the order of the rest of them, and (if that be discoverable) what the occasion; and, lastly, for which of the numerous theatres that were then subsisting they were severally written at first,—are the particulars that should chiefly engage the attention of a writer of Shakspeare's Life, and be the principal subjects of his enquiry: to assist him in which, the first impressions of these plays will do something, and their title-pages at large, which, upon that account, we mean to give in another work that will accompany *The School of Shakspeare*; and something the *School* itself will afford, that may contribute to the same service: but the corner-stone of all, must be—the works of the poet himself, from which much may be extracted by a heedful peruser of them; and, for the sake of such a peruser, and by way of putting him into the train when the plays are before him, we shall instance in one of them;—the time in which *Henry V.* was written, is determin'd almost precisely by a passage in the chorus to the fifth act, and the concluding chorus of it contains matter relative to *Henry VI.*: other plays might be mention'd, as *Henry VIII.* and *Macbeth*; but this one may be sufficient to answer our intention in producing it, which was—to spirit some

one up to this task in some future time, by shewing the possibility of it; which he may be further convinc'd of, if he reflects what great things have been done, by criticks amongst ourselves, upon subjects of this sort, and of a more remov'd antiquity than he is concern'd in. A Life thus constructed, interspers'd with such anecdotes of common notoriety as the writer's judgment shall tell him—are worth regard; together with some memorials of this poet that are happily come down to us; such as, an instrument in the Heralds' Office, confirming arms to his father; a Patent preserv'd in Rymer, granted by James the First; his last Will and Testament, extant now at Doctors Commons; his Stratford monument, and a monument of his daughter which is said to be there also;—such a Life would rise quickly into a volume; especially, with the addition of one proper and even necessary episode—a brief history of our drama, from its origin down to the poet's death: even the stage he appear'd upon, it's form, dressings, actors should be enquir'd into, as every one of those circumstances had some considerable effect upon what he compos'd for it: The subject is certainly a good one, and will fall (we hope) ere it be long into the hands of some good writer; by whose abilities this great want may at length be made up to us, and the world of letters enrich'd by the happy acquisition of a masterly *Life of Shakspeare*. CAPELL.

MR. STEEVENS'S
ADVERTISEMENT
TO THE
READER.⁵

THE want of adherence to the old copies, which has been complained of, in the text of every modern republication of Shakspeare, is fairly deducible from Mr. Rowe's inattention to one of the first duties of an editor.⁶ Mr. Rowe did not print from the earliest and most correct, but from the most remote and inaccurate of the four folios. Between the years 1623 and 1685 (the dates of the

⁵ First printed in 1773. MALONE.

⁶ " I must not (says Mr. Rowe in his dedication to the Duke of Somerset) pretend to have restor'd this work to the exactness of the author's original manuscripts: those, are lost, or, at least, are gone beyond any enquiry I could make; so that there was nothing left, but to *compare the several editions*, and give the true reading as well as I could from thence. This I have endeavour'd to do pretty carefully, and render'd very many places intelligible, that were not so before. In some of the editions, especially the last, there were many lines (and in *Hamlet* one whole scene) left out together; these are now all supply'd. I fear your grace will find some faults, but I hope they are mostly literal, and the errors of the press." Would not any one, from this declaration, suppose that Mr. Rowe (who does not appear to have consulted a single quarto) had at least *compared* the folios with each other? STEEVENS.

first and last) the errors in every play, at least, were trebled. Several pages in each of these ancient editions have been examined, that the assertion might come more fully supported. It may be added, that as every fresh editor continued to make the text of his predecessor the ground-work of his own (never collating but where difficulties occurred) some deviations from the originals had been handed down, the number of which are lessened in the impression before us, as it has been constantly compared with the most authentick copies, whether collation was absolutely necessary for the recovery of sense, or not. The person who undertook this task may have failed by inadvertency, as well as those who preceded him; but the reader may be assured, that he, who thought it his duty to free an author from such modern and unnecessary innovations as had been censured in others, has not ventured to introduce any of his own.

It is not pretended that a complete body of various readings is here collected; or that all the diversities which the copies exhibit, are pointed out; as near two thirds of them are typographical mistakes, or such a change of insignificant particles, as would croud the bottom of the page with an ostentation of materials, from which at last nothing useful could be selected.

The dialogue might indeed sometimes be lengthened by other insertions than have hitherto been made, but without advantage either to its spirit or beauty as in the following instance:

“ *Lear.* No.

“ *Kent.* Yes.

“ *Lear.* No, I say.

“ *Kent.* I say, yea.”

Here the quartos add :

“ Lear. *No, no, they would not.*

“ Kent. *Yes, they have.*”

By the admission of this negation and affirmation, has any new idea been gained?

The labours of preceding editors have not left room for a boast, that many valuable readings have been retrieved ; though it may be fairly asserted, that the text of Shakspeare is restored to the condition in which the author, or rather his first publishers, appear to have left it, such emendations as were absolutely necessary, alone admitted : for where a particle, indispensably necessary to the sense was wanting, such a supply has been silently adopted from other editions ; but where a syllable, or more, had been added for the sake of the metre only, which at first might have been irregular,⁷ such interpolations are here constantly retrenched, sometimes with, and sometimes without notice. Those speeches, which in the elder editions are printed as prose, and from their own construction are incapable of being compressed into verse, without the aid of supplemental syllables, are restored to prose again ; and the measure is divided afresh in others, where the mass of words had been inharmoniously separated into lines.

The scenery, throughout all the plays, is regulated in conformity to a rule, which the poet, by his general practice seems to have proposed to himself. Several of his pieces are come down to us, divided into scenes as well as acts. These divisions were properly his own, as they are made on settled

⁷ I retract this supposition, which was too hastily formed. See note on *The Tempest*, Vol. IV. p. 73. STEEVENS.

principles, which would hardly have been the case, had the task been executed by the players. A change of scene, with Shakspeare, most commonly implies a change of place, but always an entire evacuation of the stage. The custom of distinguishing every entrance or exit by a fresh scene, was adopted, perhaps very idly, from the French theatre.

For the length of many notes, and the accumulation of examples in others, some apology may be likewise expected. An attempt at brevity is often found to be the source of an imperfect explanation. Where a passage has been constantly misunderstood, or where the jest or pleasantry has been suffered to remain long in obscurity, more instances have been brought to clear the one, or elucidate the other, than appear at first sight to have been necessary. For these it can only be said, that when they prove that phraseology or source of merriment to have been once general, which at present seems particular, they are not quite impertinently intruded; as they may serve to free the author from a suspicion of having employed an affected singularity of expression, or indulged himself in allusions to transient customs, which were not of sufficient notoriety to deserve ridicule or reprehension. When examples in favour of contradictory opinions are assembled, though no attempt is made to decide on either part, such neutral collections should always be regarded as materials for future criticks, who may hereafter apply them with success. Authorities, whether in respect of words, or things, are not always producible from the most celebrated writers;^s yet such

^s Mr. T. Warton in his excellent *Remarks on the Fairy Queen of Spenser*, offers a similar apology for having introduced illus-

circumstances as fall below the notice of history, can only be sought in the jest-book, the satire, or the play; and the novel, whose fashion did not outlive a week, is sometimes necessary to throw light on those annals which take in the compass of an age. Those, therefore, who would wish to have the peculiarities of Nym familiarized to their ideas, must excuse the insertion of such an epigram as best

trations from obsolete literature. "I fear (says he) I shall be censured for quoting too many pieces of this sort. But experience has fatally proved, that the commentator on Spenser, Jonson, and the rest of our elder poets, will in vain give specimens of his classical erudition, unless, at the same time, he brings to his work a mind intimately acquainted with those books, which, though now forgotten, were yet in common use and high repute about the time in which his authors respectively wrote, and which they consequently must have read. While these are unknown, many allusions and many imitations will either remain obscure, or lose half their beauty and propriety: 'as the figures vanish when the canvas is decayed.'

"Pope laughs at Theobald for giving us, in his edition of Shakspeare, a sample of

— all such READING as was never read.

But these strange and ridiculous books which Theobald quoted, were unluckily the very books which SHAKSPEARE himself had studied: the knowledge of which enabled that useful editor to explain so many different allusions and obsolete customs in his poet, which otherwise could never have been understood. For want of this sort of literature, Pope tells us that the *dreadful Sagittary* in *Troilus and Cressida*, signifies Teucer, so celebrated for his skill in archery. Had he deigned to consult an old history, called *The Destruction of Troy*, a book which was the delight of SHAKSPEARE and of his age, he would have found that this formidable archer, was no other than an imaginary beast, which the Grecian army brought against Troy. If SHAKSPEARE is worth reading, he is worth explaining; and the researches used for so valuable and elegant a purpose, merit the thanks of genius and candour, not the satire of prejudice and ignorance. That labour, which so essentially contributes to the service of true taste, deserves a more honourable repository than *The Temple of Dullness*." STEEVENS.

suits the purpose, however tedious in itself; and such as would be acquainted with the propriety of Falstaff's allusion to *stewed prunes*, should not be disgusted at a multitude of instances, which, when the point is once known to be established, may be diminished by any future editor. An author who *catches* (as Pope expresses it) at *the Cynthia of a minute*, and does not furnish notes to his own works, is sure to lose half the praise which he might have claimed, had he dealt in allusions less temporary, or cleared up for himself those difficulties which lapse of time must inevitably create.

The author of the additional notes has rather been desirous to support old readings, than to claim the merit of introducing new ones. He desires to be regarded as one, who found the task he undertook more arduous than it seemed, while he was yet feeding his vanity with the hopes of introducing himself to the world as an editor in form. He, who has discovered in himself the power to rectify a few mistakes with ease, is naturally led to imagine, that all difficulties must yield to the efforts of future labour; and perhaps feels a reluctance to be undeceived at last.

Mr. Steevens desires it may be observed, that he has strictly complied with the terms exhibited in his proposals, having appropriated all such assistances, as he received, to the use of the present editor, whose judgment has, in every instance, determined on their respective merits. While he enumerates his obligations to his correspondents, it is necessary that one comprehensive remark should be made on such communications as are omitted in this edition, though they might have proved of great advantage to a more daring commentator. The majority of these were founded

on the supposition, that Shakspeare was originally an author correct in the utmost degree, but maimed and interpolated by the neglect or presumption of the players. In consequence of this belief, alterations have been proposed wherever a verse could be harmonized, an epithet exchanged for one more apposite, or a sentiment rendered less perplexed. Had the general current of advice been followed, the notes would have been filled with attempts at emendation apparently unnecessary, though sometimes elegant, and as frequently with explanations of what none would have thought difficult. A constant peruser of Shakspeare will suppose whatever is easy to his own apprehension, will prove so to that of others, and consequently may pass over some real perplexities in silence. On the contrary, if in consideration of the different abilities of every class of readers, he should offer a comment on all harsh inversions of phrase, or peculiarities of expression, he will at once excite the disgust and displeasure of such as think their own knowledge or sagacity undervalued. It is difficult to fix a medium between doing too little and too much in the task of mere explanation. There are yet many passages unexplained and unintelligible, which may be reformed, at hazard of whatever licence, for exhibitions on the stage, in which the pleasure of the audience is chiefly to be considered; but must remain untouched by the critical editor, whose conjectures are limited by narrow bounds, and who gives only what he at least supposes his author to have written.

If it is not to be expected that each vitiated passage in Shakspeare can be restored, till a greater latitude of experiment shall be allowed; so neither can it be supposed that the force of all his allusions

will be pointed out, till such books are thoroughly examined, as cannot easily at present be collected, if at all. Several of the most correct lists of our dramattick pieces exhibit the titles of plays, which are not to be met with in the completest collections. It is almost unnecessary to mention any other than Mr. Garrick's, which, curious and extensive as it is, derives its greatest value from its accessibility.⁹

⁹ There is reason to think that about the time of the Reformation, great numbers of plays were printed, though few of that age are now to be found; for part of Queen Elizabeth's *INJUNCTIONS* in 1559, are particularly directed to the suppressing of "Many pamphlets, *PLAYES*, and ballads: that no manner of person shall enterprize to print any such, &c. but under certain restrictions." Vid. Sect. V. This observation is taken from Dr. Percy's additions to his *Essay on the Origin of the English Stage*. It appears likewise from a page at the conclusion of the second volume of the entries belonging to the Stationers' Company, that in the 41st year of Queen Elizabeth, many new restraints on booksellers were laid. Among these are the following: "That no playes be printed excepte they bee allowed by such as have auctoritye." The records of the Stationers, however, contain the entries of some which have never yet been met with by the most successful collectors; nor are their titles to be found in any registers of the stage, whether ancient or modern. It should seem from the same volumes that it was customary for the Stationers to seize the whole impression of any work that had given offence, and burn it publicly at their hall, in obedience to the edicts of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of London, who sometimes enjoyed these literary excutions at their respective palaces. Among other works condemned to the flames by these discerning prelates, were the complete Satires of Bishop Hall.*

Mr. Theobald, at the conclusion of the preface to his first edition of Shakspeare, asserts, that exclusive of the dramas of Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher, he had read "above 800 of old English plays." He omitted this assertion, however, on

* Law, Physick, and Divinity, bl. l. may be found on every stall. Plays, poetry, and novels, were destroyed *publicly* by the Bishops, and *privately* by the Puritans. Hence the infinite number of them entirely lost, for which *licences* were procured, &c. FARMER.

To the other evils of our civil war must be added the interruption of polite learning, and the suppression of many dramattick and poetical names, which were plunged in obscurity by tumults and revolutions, and have never since attracted curiosity. The utter neglect of ancient English literature continued so long, that many books may be supposed to be lost; and that curiosity, which has been now for some years increasing among us, wants materials for its operations. Books and pamphlets, printed originally in small numbers,

the republication of the same work, and, I hope, he did so, through a consciousness of its utter falshood; for if we except the plays of the authors already mentioned, it would be difficult to discover half the number that were written early enough to serve the purpose for which he pretends to have perused the imaginary stock of ancient literature.

I might add, that the private collection of Mr. Theobald, which, including the plays of Jonson, Fletcher, and Shakspeare, did not amount to many more than an hundred, remained entire in the hands of the late Mr. Tonson, till the time of his death. It does not appear that any other collection but the Harleian was at that time formed; nor does Mr. Theobald's edition contain any intrinsick evidences of so comprehensive an examination of our eldest dramattick writers, as he assumes to himself the merit of having made. STEEVENS.

Whatever Mr. Theobald might venture to assert, there is sufficient evidence existing that at the time of his death he was not possessed of more than 295 quarto plays in the whole, and some of these, it is probable, were different editions of the same play. He died shortly after the 6th of September, 1744. On the 20th of October his library was advertized to be sold by auction, by Charles Corbett, and on the third day was the following lot: "295 Old English Plays in quarto, some of them so scarce as not to be had at any price: to many of which are MSS. notes and remarks by Mr. Theobald, all done up neatly in boards in single plays. They will all be sold in one lot." REED.

There were about five hundred and fifty plays printed before the Restoration, exclusive of those written by Shakspeare, Jonson, and Fletcher. MALONE.

being thus neglected, were soon destroyed; and though the capital authors were preserved, they were preserved to languish without regard. How little Shakspeare himself was once read, may be understood from Tate,¹ who, in his dedication to the altered play of *King Lear*, speaks of the original as of an obscure piece, recommended to his notice by a friend; and the author of the *Tatler*, having occasion to quote a few lines out of *Macbeth*, was content to receive them from D'Avenant's alteration of that celebrated drama, in which almost

¹ In 'the year 1707 Mr. N. Tate published a tragedy called *Injured Love, or the Cruel Husband*, and in the title-page calls himself "Author of the tragedy called *King Lear*."

In a book called *The Actor, or a Treatise on the Art of Playing*, 12mo. published in 1750, and imputed to Dr. Hill, is the following pretended extract from *Romeo and Juliet*, with the author's remark on it:

"The saints that heard our vows and know our love,
 "Seeing thy faith and thy unspotted truth,
 "Will sure take care, and let no wrongs annoy thee.
 "Upon my knees I'll ask them every day
 "How my kind Juliet does; and every night,
 "In the severe distresses of my fate,
 "As I perhaps shall wander through the desert,
 "And want a place to rest my weary head on,
 "I'll count the stars, and bless 'em as they shine,
 "And court them all for my dear Juliet's safety."

"The reader will pardon us on this and some other occasions, that where we quote passages from plays, we give them *as the author gives them, not as the butcherly hand of a blockhead prompter may have lopped them, or as the unequal genius of some bungling critic may have attempted to mend them*. Whoever remembers the merit of the player's speaking the things we celebrate them for, we are pretty confident will wish he spoke them *absolutely as we give them, that is, as the author gives them*."

Perhaps it is unnecessary to inform the reader that not one of the lines above quoted, is to be found in the *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakspeare. They are copied from the *Caius Marius* of Otway.

STEEVENS.

every original beauty is either awkwardly disguised, or arbitrarily omitted. So little were the defects or peculiarities of the old writers known, even at the beginning of our century, that though the custom of alliteration had prevailed to that degree in the time of Shakspeare, that it became contemptible and ridiculous, yet it is made one of Waller's praises by a writer of his life, that he first introduced this practice into English versification.

It will be expected that some notice should be taken of the last editor of Shakspeare, and that his merits should be estimated with those of his predecessors. Little, however, can be said of a work, to the completion of which, both a large proportion of the commentary and various readings is as yet wanting. *The Second Part of King Henry VI.* is the only play from that edition, which has been consulted in the course of this work; for as several passages there are arbitrarily omitted, and as no notice is given when other deviations are made from the old copies, it was of little consequence to examine any further. This circumstance is mentioned, lest such accidental coincidences of opinion, as may be discovered hereafter, should be interpreted into plagiarism.

It may occasionally happen, that some of the remarks long ago produced by others, are offered again as recent discoveries. It is likewise absolutely impossible to pronounce with any degree of certainty, whence all the hints, which furnish matter for a commentary, have been collected, as they lay scattered in many books and papers, which were probably never read but once, or the particulars which they contain received only in the course of common conversation; nay, what is

called plagiarism, is often no more than the result of having thought alike with others on the same subject.

The dispute about the learning of Shakspeare being now finally settled, a catalogue is added of those translated authors, whom Mr. Pope has thought proper to call

“ The classicks of an age that *heard of none.*”

The reader may not be displeas'd to have the Greek and Roman poets, orators, &c. who had been rendered accessible to our author, expos'd at one view;² especially as the list has received the advantage of being corrected and amplified by the Reverend Dr. Farmer, the substance of whose very decisive pamphlet is interspersed through the notes which are added in this revisal of Dr. Johnson's Shakspeare.

To those who have advanced the reputation of our poet, it has been endeavour'd, by Dr. Johnson, in a foregoing preface, impartially to allot their dividend of fame; and it is with great regret that we now add to the catalogue, another, the consequence of whose death will perhaps affect not only the works of Shakspeare, but of many other writers. Soon after the first appearance of this edition, a disease, rapid in its progress, deprived the world of Mr. Jacob Tonson; a man, whose zeal for the improvement of English literature, and whose liberality to men of learning, gave him a just title to all the honours which men of learning can bestow. To suppose that a person employed in an extensive trade, lived in a state of

* See Vol. II.

indifference to loss and gain, would be to conceive a character incredible and romantick; but it may be justly said of Mr. Tonson, that he had enlarged his mind beyond solicitude about petty losses, and refined it from the desire of unreasonable profit. He was willing to admit those with whom he contracted, to the just advantage of their own labours; and had never learned to consider the author as an under-agent to the bookseller. The wealth which he inherited or acquired, he enjoyed like a man conscious of the dignity of a profession subservient to learning. His domestick life was elegant, and his charity was liberal. His manners were soft, and his conversation delicate: nor is, perhaps, any quality in him more to be censured, than that reserve which confined his acquaintance to a small number, and made his example less useful, as it was less extensive. He was the last commercial name of a family which will be long remembered; and if Horace thought it not improper to convey the *SOSII* to posterity; if rhetorick suffered no dishonour from Quintilian's dedication to *TRYPHO*; let it not be thought that we disgrace Shakspeare, by appending to his works the name of *TONSON*.

To this prefatory advertisement I have now subjoined³ a chapter extracted from the *Guls Horn-book*, (a satirical pamphlet written by Decker in the year 1609) as it affords the reader a more complete idea of the customs peculiar to our ancient theatres, than any other publication which has hitherto fallen in my way. See this performance, page 27.

³ This addition to Mr. Steevens's Advertisement was made in 1778. MALONE.

“ CHAP. VI.

“ *How a Gallant should behave himself in a Play-house.*

“ The *theatre* is your poet’s Royal Exchange, upon which, their muses (that are now turn’d to merchants) meeting, barter away that light commodity of words for a lighter ware than words, *plaudities* and the *breath* of the great *beast*, which (like the threatnings of two cowards) vanish all into aire. *Plaiers* and their *factors*, who put away the stuffe and make the best of it they possibly can (as indeed ’tis their parts so to doe) your gallant, your courtier, and your capten, had wont to be the soundest pay-masters, and I thinke are still the surest chapmen: and these by meanes that their heades are well stockt, deale upon this comical freight by the *grosse*; when your *groundling*, and *gallery commoner* buyes his sport by the penny, and, like a *hagler*, is glad to utter it againe by retailing.

“ Sithence then the place is so free in entertainment, allowing a stoole as well to the farmer’s sonne as to your Templer: that your stinkard has the self same libertie to be there in his tobacco fumes, which your sweet courtier hath: and that your carman and tinker claime as strong a voice in their suffrage, and sit to give judgment on the plaies’ life and death, as well as the proudest *Momus* among the tribe of *critick*; it is fit that hee, whom the most tailors’ bils do make room for, when he comes, should not be basely (like a vyoll) cas’d up in a corner.

“ Whether therefore the gatherers of the pub-

lique or private play-house stand to receive the afternoone's rent, let our gallant (having paid it) presently advance himself up to the throne of the stage. I meane not in the lords' roome (which is now but the stage's suburbs). No, those boxes by the iniquity of custome, conspiracy of waiting-women, and gentlemen-ushers, that there sweat together, and the covetous sharers, are contemptibly thrust into the reare, and much new satten is there dambd by being smothered to death in darknesse. But on the very rushes where the comedy is to daunce, yea and under the state of *Cambises* himselve must our feather'd estridge, like a piece of ordnance be planted valiantly (because impudently) beating downe the mewes and hisses of the opposed rascality.

“ For do but cast up a reckoning, what large cummings in are purs'd up by sitting on the stage. First a conspicuous eminence is gotten, by which means the best and most essential parts of a gallant (good cloathes, a proportionable legge, white hand, the Persian locke, and a tollerable beard,) are perfectly revealed.

“ By sitting on the stage you have a sign'd patent to engrosse the whole commodity of censure; may lawfully presume to be a girder; and stand at the helme to steere the passage of scænes, yet no man shall once offer to hinder you from obtaining the title of an insolent over-weening coxcombe.

“ By sitting on the stage, you may (without traueelling for it) at the very next doore, aske whose play it is: and by that quest of inquiry, the law warrants you to avoid much mistaking: if you know not the author, you may raile against him; and peradventure so behave yourselve, that you may enforce the author to know you.

“ By sitting on the stage, if you be a knight, you may happily get you a mistresse: if a mere *Fleet-street* gentleman, a wife: but assure yourselve by continuall residence, you are the first and principall man in election to begin the number of *We three*.

“ By spreading your body on the stage, and by being a justice in examining of plaies, you shall put yourselve into such a true scænicall authority, that some poet shall not dare to present his muse rudely before your eyes, without having first unmaskt her, rifled her, and discovered all her bare and most mystical parts before you at a taverne, when you most knightly, shal for his paines, pay for both their suppers.

“ By sitting on the stage, you may (with small cost) purchase the deere acquaintance of the boyes: have a good stoole for sixpence: at any time know what particular part any of the infants present: get your match lighted, examine the play-suits' lace, perhaps win wagers upon laying 'tis copper, &c. And to conclude, whether you be a foole or a justice of peace, a cuckold or a capten, a lord maior's sonne or a dawcocke, a knave or an under shriefe, of what stamp soever you be, currant or counterfet, the stagelike time will bring you to most perfect light, and lay you open: neither are you to be hunted from thence though the scar-crowes in the yard hoot you, hisse at you, spit at you, yea throw dirt even in your teeth: 'tis most gentleman-like patience to endure all this, and to laugh at the silly animals. But if the rabble, with a full throat, crie away with the foole, you were worse than a mad-man to tarry by it: for the gentleman and the foole should never sit on the stage together.

“ Mary, let this observation go hand in hand with the rest : or rather, like a country-serving man, some five yards before them. Present not your selfe on the stage (especially at a new play) untill the quaking prologue hath (by rubbing) got cullor into his cheekes, and is ready to give the trumpets their cue that hees upon point to enter : for then it is time, as though you were one of the *properties*, or that you dropt of the *hangings*, to creep behind the arras, with your *tripos* or three-legged stoole in one hand, and a teston mounted betweene a fore-finger and a thumbe, in the other ; for if you should bestow your person upon the vulgar, when the belly of the house is but halfe full, your apparell is quite eaten up, the fashion lost, and the proportion of your body in more danger to be devoured, then if it were served up in the Counter amongst the Poultry: avoid that as you would the bastome. It shall crowne you with rich commendation, to laugh alowd in the midst of the most serious and saddest scene of the terriblest tragedy : and to let that clapper (your tongue) be tost so high that all the house may ring of it : your lords use it ; your knights are apes to the lords, and do so too : your inne-a-court-man is zany to the knights, and (many very scurvily) comes likewise limping after it : bee thou a beagle to them all, and never lin snuffing till you have scented them : for by talking and laughing (like a ploughman in a morris) you heape *Pelion* upon *Ossa*, glory upon glory : as first all the eyes in the galleries will leave walking after the players, and onely follow you : the simplest dolt in the house snatches up your name, and when he meetes you in the streetes; or that you fall into his hands in the middle of a watch, his word shall be taken for

you: heele cry, *Hees such a gallant*, and you passe. Secondly you publish your temperance to the world, in that you seeme not to resort thither to taste vaine pleasures with a hungrie appetite; but onely as a gentleman, to spend a foolish houre or two, because you can doe nothing else. Thirdly you mightily disrelish the audience, and disgrace the author: marry, you take up (though it be at the worst hand) a strong opinion of your owne judgement, and inforce the poet to take pity of your weakenesse, and by some dedicated sonnet to bring you into a better paradise, onely to stop your mouth.

“ If you can (either for love or money) provide your selfe a lodging by the water side: for above the conveniencie it brings to shun shoulder-clapping, and to ship away your cockatrice betimes in the morning, it addes a kind of state unto you, to be carried from thence to the staires of your playhouse: hate a sculler (remember that) worse then to be acquainted with one ath’ scullery. No, your oares are your onely sea-crabs, boord them, and take heed you never go twice together with one paire: often shifting is a great credit to gentlemen: and that dividing of your fare wil make the poore watersnaks be ready to pul you in peeces to enjoy your custome. No matter whether upon landing you have money or no; you may swim in twentie of their boates over the river upon *ticket*; mary, when silver comes in, remember to pay trebble their fare, and it will make your flounder-catchers to send more thanks after you, when you doe not draw, then when you doe: for they know, it will be their owne another daie.

“ Before the play begins, fall to cardes; you may win or loose (as fencers doe in a prize) and beate

one another by confederacie, yet share the money when you meete at supper: notwithstanding, to gul the raggamuffins that stand a loofe gaping at you, throw the cards (having first torne four or five of them) round about the stage, just upon the third sound, as though you had lost: it skils not if the four knaves ly on their backs, and outface the audience, there's none such fooles as dare take exceptions at them, because ere the play go off, better knaves than they, will fall into the company.

“ Now, Sir, if the writer be a fellow that hath either epigram'd you, or hath had a flirt at your mistris, or hath brought either your feather, or your red beard, or your little legs, &c. on the stage, you shall disgrace him worse then by tossing him in a blanket, or giving him the bastinado in a taverne, if in the middle of his play (bee it pastorall or comedy, morall or tragedie) you rise with a skreud and discontented face from your stoole to be gone: no matter whether the scenes be good or no; the better they are, the worse doe you distast them: and beeing on your feete, sneake not away like a coward, but salute all your gentle acquaintance that are spred either on the rushes or on stooles about you, and draw what troope you can from the stage after you: the *mimicks* are beholden to you, for allowing them elbow roome: their poet cries perhaps, a pox go with you, but care not you for that; there's no musick without frets.

“ Mary, if either the company, or indisposition of the weather binde you to sit it out, my counsell is then that you turne plaine ape: take up a rush and tickle the earnest eares of your fellow gallants, to make other fooles fall a laughing: mewe at the passionate speeches, blare at merrie, finde fault with

the musicke, whewe at the children's action, whistle at the songs; and above all, curse the sharers, that whereas the same day you had bestowed forty shillings on an embroidered felt and feather (Scotch fashion) for your mistres in the court, or your punck in the cittie, within two houres after, you encounter with the very same block on the stage, when the haberdasher swore to you the impression was extant but that morning

“ To conclude, hoord up the finest play-scrapes you can get, upon which your leane wit may most savourly feede, for want of other stuffe, when the *Arcadian* and *Euphuis'd* gentlewomen have their tongues sharpened to set upon you: that qualitie (next to your shittlecocke) is the only furniture to a courtier that's but a new beginner, and is but in his A B C of complement. The next places that are fil'd after the play-houses bee emptied, are (or ought to be) tavernes: into a tavernne then let us next march, where the braines of one hogshead must be beaten out to make up another.”⁴

⁴ The following pretty picture of THE STAGE is given in Gayton's Notes on *Don Quixote*, 1654, p. 271:

“ Men come not to study at a play-house, but love such expressions and passages, which with ease insinuate themselves into their capacities. *Lingua*, that learned comedy of the contention betwixt the five senses for superiority, is not to be prostituted to the common stage, but is only proper for an *Academy*; to them bring *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, Green's *Tu Quoque*, the *Devil of Edmonton*, and the like; or, if it be on holy dayes, when saylers, water-men, shoo-makers, butchers, and apprentices, are at leisure, then it is good policy to amaze those violent spirits with some tearing Tragedy full of fights and skirmishes: as the *Guelphs* and *Guiblins*, *Greeks* and *Trojans*, or the three *London Apprentices*; which commonly ends in six acts, the spectators frequently mounting the stage, and making a more bloody catastrophe amongst themselves, than the players did. I have known upon one of these *festivals*, but especially at *Shrove-*

I should have attempted on the present occasion to enumerate all other pamphlets, &c. from whence particulars relative to the conduct of our early theatres might be collected, but that Dr. Percy, in his first volume of the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, (third edit. p. 128, &c.) has extracted such passages from them as tend to the illustration of this subject; to which he has added more accurate remarks than my experience in these matters would have enabled me to supply. STEEVENS.

tide, where the players have been appointed, notwithstanding their bills to the contrary, to act what the major part of the company had a mind to; sometimes *Tamerlane*, sometimes *Jugurth*, sometimes *The Jew of Malta*; and sometimes parts of all these, and at last none of the three taking, they were forc'd to undresse and put off their tragick habits, and conclude the day with *the Merry Milk-maides*. And unlesse this were done, and the popular humour satisfied, as sometimes it so fortun'd, that the players were refractory; the benches, the tiles, the laths, the stones, oranges, apples, nuts, flew about most liberally; and, as there were mechanicks of all professions, who fell every one to his owne trade, and dissolved a house in an instant, and made a ruine of a stately fabrick. It was not then the most mimicall nor fighting man, *Fowler*, nor *Andrew Cane*, could pacifie: Prologues nor Epilogues would prevaile; the devill and the fool were quite out of favour. Nothing but noise and tumult fills the house, untill a cogg take 'um, and then to the bawdy houses and reforme them; and instantly to the *Bank's Side*, where the poor bears must conclude the riot, and fight twenty dogs at a time beside the butchers, which sometimes fell into the service; this perform'd, and *the horse* and *jack-an-apes* for a jigge, they had sport enough that day for nothing."

TODD.

PREFACE

TO

MR. M. MASON'S COMMENTS, &c.

1785.

NOT thoroughly satisfied with any of the former editions of Shakspeare, even that of Johnson, I had resolved to venture upon one of my own, and had actually collected materials for the purpose, when that,^s which is the subject of the following Observations, made its appearance; in which I found that a considerable part of the amendments and explanations I had intended to propose were anticipated by the labours and eccentric reading of Steevens, the ingenious researches of Malone, and the sagacity of Tyrwhitt.—I will fairly confess that I was somewhat mortified at this discovery, which compelled me to relinquish a favourite pursuit, from whence I had vainly expected to derive some degree of credit in the literary world. This, however, was a secondary consideration; and my principal purpose will be answered to my wish, if the Comments, which I now submit to the publick shall, in any other hands, contribute materially to a more complete edition of our inimitable poet.

If we may judge from the advertisement prefixed

* Edit. 1778.

VOL. I.

E E

to his Supplement, Malone seems to think that no other edition can hereafter be wanted; as in speaking of the last, he says, "The text of the author seems now to be finally settled, the great abilities and unwearied researches of the editor having left little obscure or unexplained."⁶

Though I cannot subscribe to this opinion of Malone, with respect to the final adjustment of the text, I shall willingly join in his encomium on the editor, who deserves the applause and gratitude of the publick, not only for his industry and abilities, but also for the zeal with which he has prosecuted the object he had in view, which prompted him, not only to the wearisome task of collation, but also to engage in a peculiar course of reading, neither pleasing nor profitable for any other purpose.

But I will venture to assert, that his merit is more conspicuous in the comments than the text; in the regulation of which he seems to have acted rather from caprice, than any settled principle; admitting alterations, in some passages, on very insufficient authority, indeed, whilst in others he has retained the antient readings, though evidently corrupt, in preference to amendments as evidently just; and it frequently happens, that after pointing out to us the true reading, he adheres to that which he himself has proved to be false. Had he regulated the text in every place according to his own judgment, Malone's observation would have been nearer to the truth; but as it now stands, the

⁶ As I was never vain enough to suppose the edit. 1778 was entitled to this encomium, I can find no difficulty in allowing that it has been properly recalled by the gentleman who bestowed it. See his Preface; and his *Letter to the Reverend Dr. Farmer*, p. 7 and 8. STEEVENS.

last edition has no signal advantage, that I can perceive, over that of Johnson, in point of correctness.

But the object that Steevens had most at heart, was the illustration of Shakspeare, in which it must be owned he has clearly surpassed all the former editors. If without his abilities, application, or reading, I have happened to succeed in explaining some passages, which he misapprehended, or in suggesting amendments that escaped his sagacity, it is owing merely to the minute attention with which I have studied every line of these plays, whilst the other commentators, I will not except even Steevens himself, have too generally confined their observation and ingenuity to those litigated passages, which have been handed down to them by former editors, as requiring either amendment or explanation, and have suffered many others to pass unheeded, that in truth, were equally erroneous or obscure. It may possibly be thought that I have gone too far in the other extreme, in pointing out trifling mistakes in the printing, which every reader perceives to be such, and amends as he reads; but where correctness is the object, no inaccuracy, however immaterial, should escape unnoticed.—

—There is perhaps no species of publication whatever, more likely to produce diversity of opinion than verbal criticisms; for as there is no certain criterion of truth, no established principle by which we can decide whether they be justly founded or not, every reader is left to his own imagination, on which will depend his censure or applause. I have not therefore the vanity to hope that all these observations will be generally approved of; some of them, I confess, are not thoroughly satis-

factory even to myself, and are hazarded, rather than relied on :—But there are others which I offer with some degree of confidence, and I flatter myself that they will meet, upon the whole, with a favourable reception from the admirers of Shakspeare, as tending to elucidate a number of passages which have hitherto been misprinted or misunderstood.

In forming these comments, I have confined myself solely to the particular edition which is the object of them, without comparing it with any other, even with that of Johnson: not doubting but the editors had faithfully stated the various readings of the first editions, I resolved to avoid the labour of collating; but had I been inclined to undertake that task, it would not have been in my power, as few, if any, of the ancient copies can be had in the country where I reside.

I have selected from the Supplement, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, because it is supposed by some of the commentators to have been the work of Shakspeare, and is at least as faulty as any of the rest. The remainder of the plays which Malone has published are neither, in my opinion, the production of our poet, or sufficiently incorrect to require any comment. M. MASON.

MR. REED'S
ADVERTISEMENT,

BEFORE THE THIRD EDITION, 1785.

THE works of Shakspeare, during the last twenty years, have been the objects of publick attention more than at any former period. In that time the various editions of his performances have been examined, his obscurities illuminated, his defects pointed out, and his beauties displayed, so fully, so accurately, and in so satisfactory a manner, that it might reasonably be presumed little would remain to be done by either new editors or new commentators: yet, though the diligence and sagacity of those gentlemen who contributed towards the last edition of this author may seem to have almost exhausted the subject, the same train of enquiry has brought to light new discoveries, and accident will probably continue to produce further illustrations, which may render some alterations necessary in every succeeding republication.

Since the last edition of this work in 1778, the zeal for elucidating Shakspeare, which appeared in most of the gentlemen whose names are affixed to the notes, has suffered little abatement. The same persevering spirit of enquiry has continued to exert itself, and the same laborious search into the literature, the manners, and the customs of the times, which was formerly so successfully employed, has

remained undiminished. By these aids some new information has been obtained, and some new materials collected. From the assistance of such writers, even Shakspeare will receive no discredit.

When the very great and various talents of the last editor, particularly for this work, are considered, it will occasion much regret to find, that having superintended two editions of his favourite author through the press, he has at length declined the laborious office, and committed the care of the present edition to one who laments with the rest of the world the secession of his predecessor; being conscious, as well of his own inferiority, as of the injury the publication will sustain by the change.

As some alterations have been made in the present edition, it may be thought necessary to point them out. These are of two kinds, additions and omissions. The additions are such as have been supplied by the last editor, and the principal of the living commentators. To mention these assistances, is sufficient to excite expectation; but to speak any thing in their praise will be superfluous to those who are acquainted with their former labours. Some remarks are also added from new commentators, and some notices extracted from books which have been published in the course of a few years past.

Of the omissions, the most important are some notes which have been demonstrated to be ill founded, and some which were supposed to add to the size of the volumes without increasing their value. It may probably have happened that a few are rejected which ought to have been retained; and in that case the present editor, who has been the occasion of their removal, will feel some con-

cern from the injustice of his proceeding. He is, however, inclined to believe, that what he has omitted will be pardoned by the reader; and that the liberty which he has taken will not be thought to have been licentiously indulged. At all events, that the censure may fall where it ought, he desires it to be understood that no person is answerable for any of these innovations but himself.

It has been observed by the last editor, that the multitude of instances which have been produced to exemplify particular words, and explain obsolete customs, may, when the point is once known to be established, be diminished by any future editor, and, in conformity to this opinion, several quotations, which were heretofore properly introduced, are now curtailed. Were an apology required on this occasion, the present editor might shelter himself under the authority of Prior, who long ago has said,

“ That when one's proofs are aptly chosen,
“ Four are as valid as four dozen.”

The present editor thinks it unnecessary to say any thing of his own share in the work, except that he undertook it in consequence of an application which was too flattering and too honourable to him to decline. He mentions this only to have it known that he did not intrude himself into the situation. He is not insensible, that the task would have been better executed by many other gentlemen, and particularly by some whose names appear to the notes. He has added but little to the bulk of the volumes from his own observations, having, upon every occasion, rather chosen to avoid a note, than to court the opportunity of inserting one. The liberty he has taken of omitting some

remarks, he is confident, has been exercised without prejudice and without partiality; and therefore, trusting to the candour and indulgence of the publick, will forbear to detain them any longer from the entertainment they may receive from the greatest poet of this or any other nation. REED.

Nov. 10, 1785.

MR. MALONE'S

P R E F A C E.

IN the following work, the labour of eight years, I have endeavoured, with unceasing solicitude, to give a faithful and correct edition of the plays and poems of Shakspeare. Whatever imperfection or errors therefore may be found in it, (and what work of so great a length and difficulty was ever free from error or imperfection?) will, I trust, be imputed to any other cause than want of zeal for the due execution of the task which I ventured to undertake.

The difficulties to be encountered by an editor of the works of Shakspeare, have been so frequently stated, and are so generally acknowledged, that it may seem unnecessary to conciliate the publick

favour by this plea: but as these in my opinion have in some particulars been over-rated, and in others not sufficiently insisted on, and as the true state of the ancient copies of this poet's writings has never been laid before the publick, I shall consider the subject as if it had not been already discussed by preceding editors.

In the year 1756 Dr. Johnson published the following excellent scheme of a new edition of Shakspeare's dramattick pieces, which he completed in 1765 :

“ When the works of Shakspeare are, after so many editions, again offered to the publick, it will doubtless be enquired, why Shakspeare stands in more need of critical assistance than any other of the English writers, and what are the deficiencies of the late attempts, which another editor may hope to supply.

“ The business of him that republishes an ancient book is, to correct what is corrupt, and to explain what is obscure. To have a text corrupt in many places, and in many doubtful, is, among the authors that have written since the use of types, almost peculiar to Shakspeare. Most writers, by publishing their own works, prevent all various readings, and preclude all conjectural criticism. Books indeed are sometimes published after the death of him who produced them, but they are better secured from corruptions than these unfortunate compositions. They subsist in a single copy, written or revised by the author; and the faults of the printed volume can be only faults of one descent.

“ But of the works of Shakspeare the condition has been far different: he sold them, not to be printed, but to be played. They were immediately

copied for the actors, and multiplied by transcript after transcript, vitiated by the blunders of the penman, or changed by the affectation of the player; perhaps enlarged to introduce a jest, or mutilated to shorten the representation; and printed at last without the concurrence of the author, without the consent of the proprietor, from compilations made by chance or by stealth out of the separate parts written for the theatre: and thus thrust into the world surreptitiously and hastily, they suffered another depravation from the ignorance and negligence of the printers, as every man who knows the state of the press in that age will readily conceive.

“ It is not easy for invention to bring together so many causes concurring to vitiate a text. No other author ever gave up his works to fortune and time with so little care; no books could be left in hands so likely to injure them, as plays frequently acted, yet continued in manuscript: no other transcribers were likely to be so little qualified for their task, as those who copied for the stage, at a time when the lower ranks of the people were universally illiterate: no other editions were made from fragments so minutely broken, and so fortuitously re-united; and in no other age was the art of printing in such unskilful hands.

“ With the causes of corruption that make the revisal of Shakspeare's dramattick pieces necessary, may be enumerated the causes of obscurity, which may be partly imputed to his age, and partly to himself.

“ When a writer outlives his contemporaries, and remains almost the only unforgotten name of a distant time, he is necessarily obscure. Every age has its modes of speech, and its cast of thought;

which, though easily explained when there are many books to be compared with each other, become sometimes unintelligible, and always difficult, when there are no parallel passages that may conduce to their illustration. Shakspeare is the first considerable author of sublime or familiar dialogue in our language. Of the books which he read, and from which he formed his style, some perhaps have perished, and the rest are neglected. His imitations are therefore unnoted, his allusions are undiscovered, and many beauties, both of pleasantry and greatness, are lost with the objects to which they were united, as the figures vanish when the canvas has decayed.

“ It is the great excellence of Shakspeare, that he drew his scenes from nature, and from life. He copied the manners of the world then passing before him, and has more allusions than other poets to the traditions and superstitions of the vulgar; which must therefore be traced before he can be understood.

“ He wrote at a time when our poetical language was yet unformed, when the meaning of our phrases was yet in fluctuation, when words were adopted at pleasure from the neighbouring languages, and while the Saxon was still visibly mingled in our diction. The reader is therefore embarrassed at once with dead and with foreign languages, with obsolescence and innovation. In that age, as in all others, fashion produced phraseology, which succeeding fashion swept away before its meaning was generally known, or sufficiently authorized: and in that age, above all others, experiments were made upon our language, which distorted its combinations, and disturbed its uniformity.

“ If Shakspeare has difficulties above other

writers, it is to be imputed to the nature of his work, which required the use of the common colloquial language, and consequently admitted many phrases allusive, elliptical, and proverbial, such as we speak and hear every hour without observing them; and of which, being now familiar, we do not suspect that they can ever grow uncouth, or that, being now obvious, they can ever seem remote.

“These are the principal causes of the obscurity of Shakspeare; to which may be added that fullness of idea, which might sometimes load his words with more sentiment than they could conveniently convey, and that rapidity of imagination which might hurry him to a second thought before he had fully explained the first. But my opinion is, that very few of his lines were difficult to his audience, and that he used such expressions as were then common, though the paucity of contemporary writers makes them now seem peculiar.

“Authors are often praised for improvement, or blamed for innovation, with very little justice, by those who read few other books of the same age. Addison himself has been so unsuccessful in enumerating the words with which Milton has enriched our language, as perhaps not to have named one of which Milton was the author: and Bentley has yet more unhappily praised him as the introducer of those elisions into English poetry, which had been used from the first essays of versification among us, and which Milton was indeed the last that practised.

“Another impediment, not the least vexatious to the commentator, is the exactness with which Shakspeare followed his author. Instead of dilating his thoughts into generalities, and expressing

incidents with poetical latitude, he often combines circumstances unnecessary to his main design, only because he happened to find them together. Such passages can be illustrated only by him who has read the same story in the very book which Shakspeare consulted.

“ He that undertakes an edition of Shakspeare, has all these difficulties to encounter, and all these obstructions to remove.

“ The corruptions of the text will be corrected by a careful collation of the oldest copies, by which it is hoped that many restorations may yet be made; at least it will be necessary to collect and note the variations as materials for future criticks, for it very often happens that a wrong reading has affinity to the right.

“ In this part all the present editions are apparently and intentionally defective. The criticks did not so much as wish to facilitate the labour of those that followed them. The same books are still to be compared; the work that has been done, is to be done again, and no single edition will supply the reader with a text on which he can rely as the best copy of the works of Shakspeare.

“ The edition now proposed will at least have this advantage over others. It will exhibit all the observable varieties of all the copies that can be found; that, if the reader is not satisfied with the editor's determination, he may have the means of choosing better for himself.

“ Where all the books are evidently vitiated, and collation can give no assistance, then begins the task of critical sagacity: and some changes may well be admitted in a text never settled by the author, and so long exposed to caprice and ignorance. But nothing shall be imposed, as in

the Oxford edition, without notice of the alteration; nor shall conjecture be wantonly or unnecessarily indulged.

“ It has been long found, that very specious emendations do not equally strike all minds with conviction, nor even the same mind at different times; and therefore, though perhaps many alterations may be proposed as eligible, very few will be obtruded as certain. In a language so ungrammatical as the English, and so licentious as that of Shakspeare, emendatory criticism is always hazardous; nor can it be allowed to any man who is not particularly versed in the writings of that age, and particularly studious of his author's diction. There is danger lest peculiarities should be mistaken for corruptions, and passages rejected as unintelligible, which a narrow mind happens not to understand.

“ All the former criticks have been so much employed on the correction of the text, that they have not sufficiently attended to the elucidation of passages obscured by accident or time. The editor will endeavour to read the books which the author read, to trace his knowledge to its source, and compare his copies with the originals. If in this part of his design he hopes to attain any degree of superiority to his predecessors, it must be considered, that he has the advantage of their labours; that part of the work being already done, more care is naturally bestowed on the other part; and that, to declare the truth, Mr. Rowe and Mr. Pope were very ignorant of the ancient English literature; Dr. Warburton was detained by more important studies; and Mr. Theobald, if fame be just to his memory, considered learning only as an instrument of gain, and made no further inquiry after his author's meaning, when once he had

notes sufficient to embellish his page with the expected decorations.

“ With regard to obsolete or peculiar diction, the editor may perhaps claim some degree of confidence, having had more motives to consider the whole extent of our language than any other man from its first formation. He hopes, that, by comparing the works of Shakspeare with those of writers who lived at the same time, immediately preceded, or immediately followed him, he shall be able to ascertain his ambiguities, disentangle his intricacies, and recover the meaning of words now lost in the darkness of antiquity.

“ When therefore any obscurity arises from an allusion to some other book, the passage will be quoted. When the diction is entangled, it will be cleared by a paraphrase or interpretation. When the sense is broken by the suppression of part of the sentiment in pleasantry or passion, the connection will be supplied. When any forgotten custom is hinted, care will be taken to retrieve and explain it. The meaning assigned to doubtful words will be supported by the authorities of other writers, or by parallel passages of Shakspeare himself.

“ The observation of faults and beauties is one of the duties of an annotator, which some of Shakspeare's editors have attempted, and some have neglected. For this part of his task, and for this only, was Mr. Pope eminently and indisputably qualified: nor has Dr. Warburton followed him with less diligence or less success. But I never observed that mankind was much delighted or improved by their asterisks, commas, or double commas; of which the only effect is, that they preclude the pleasure of judging for ourselves;

teach the young and ignorant to decide without principles; defeat curiosity and discernment by leaving them less to discover; and, at last, show the opinion of the critick, without the reasons on which it was founded, and without affording any light by which it may be examined.

“ The editor, though he may less delight his own vanity, will probably please his reader more, by supposing him equally able with himself to judge of beauties and faults, which require no previous acquisition of remote knowledge. A description of the obvious scenes of nature, a representation of general life, a sentiment of reflection or experience, a deduction of conclusive argument, a forcible eruption of effervescent passion, are to be considered as proportionate to common apprehension, unassisted by critical officiousness; since to conceive them, nothing more is requisite than acquaintance with the general state of the world, and those faculties which he must always bring with him who would read Shakspeare.

“ But when the beauty arises from some adaptation of the sentiment to customs worn out of use, to opinions not universally prevalent, or to any accidental or minute particularity, which cannot be supplied by common understanding, or common observation, it is the duty of a commentator to lend his assistance.

“ The notice of beauties and faults thus limited will make no distinct part of the design, being reducible to the explanation of obscure passages.

“ The editor does not however intend to preclude himself from the comparison of Shakspeare's sentiments or expression with those of ancient or modern authors, or from the display of any beauty not obvious to the students of poetry; for as he

hopes to leave his author better understood, he wishes likewise to procure him more rational approbation.

“The former editors have affected to slight their predecessors : but in this edition all that is valuable will be adopted from every commentator, that posterity may consider it as including all the rest, and exhibit whatever is hitherto known of the great father of the English drama.”

Though Dr. Johnson has here pointed out with his usual perspicuity and vigour, the true course to be taken by an editor of Shakspeare, some of the positions which he has laid down may be controverted, and some are indubitably not true. It is not true that the plays of this author were more incorrectly printed than those of any of his contemporaries : for in the plays of Marlowe, Marston, Fletcher, Massinger, and others, as many errors may be found. It is not true that the art of printing was in no other age in so unskilful hands. Nor is it true, in the latitude in which it is stated, that “these plays were printed from compilations made by chance or by stealth out of the separate parts written for the theatre :” two only of all his dramas, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *King Henry V.* appear to have been thus thrust into the world, and of the former it is yet a doubt whether it is a first sketch or an imperfect copy. I do not believe that words were then adopted at pleasure from the neighbouring languages, or that an antiquated diction was then employed by any poet but Spenser. That the obscurities of our author, to whatever cause they may be referred, do not arise from the paucity of contemporary writers, the present edition may furnish indisputable evidence.

And lastly, if it be true, that "very few of Shakspeare's lines were difficult to his audience, and that he used such expressions as were then common," (a position of which I have not the smallest doubt,) it cannot be true, that "his reader is embarrassed at once with dead and with foreign languages, with obsoleteness and innovation."

When Mr. Pope first undertook the task of revising these plays, every anomaly of language, and every expression that was not understood at that time, were considered as errors or corruptions, and the text was altered, or amended, as it was called, at pleasure. The principal writers of the early part of this century seem never to have looked behind them, and to have considered their own era and their own phraseology as the standard of perfection: hence, from the time of Pope's edition, for above twenty years, to alter Shakspeare's text and to restore it, were considered as synonymous terms. During the last thirty years our principal employment has been to *restore*, in the true sense of the word; to eject the arbitrary and capricious innovations made by our predecessors from ignorance of the phraseology and customs of the age in which Shakspeare lived.

As on the one hand our poet's text has been described as more corrupt than it really is, so on the other, the labour required to investigate fugitive allusions, to explain and justify obsolete phraseology by parallel passages from contemporary authors, and to form a genuine text by a faithful collation of the original copies, has not perhaps had that notice to which it is entitled; for undoubtedly it is a laborious and a difficult task: and the due execution of this it is, which can alone

entitle an editor of Shakspeare to the favour of the publick.

I have said that the comparative value of the various ancient copies of Shakspeare's plays has never been precisely ascertained. To prove this, it will be necessary to go into a long and minute discussion, for which, however, no apology is necessary: for though to explain and illustrate the writings of our poet is a principal duty of his editor, to ascertain his genuine text, to fix what is to be explained, is his first and immediate object: and till it be established which of the ancient copies is entitled to preference, we have no criterion by which the text can be ascertained.

Fifteen of Shakspeare's plays were printed in quarto antecedent to the first complete collection of his works, which was published by his fellow-comedians in 1623. These plays are, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *The Two Parts of King Henry IV.* *King Richard II.* *King Richard III.* *The Merchant of Venice*, *King Henry V.* *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Tr Julius and Cressida*, *King Lear*, and *Othello*.

The players, when they mention these copies, represent them all as mutilated and imperfect; but this was merely thrown out to give an additional value to their own edition, and is not strictly true of any but two of the whole number; *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *King Henry V.*—With respect to the other thirteen copies, though undoubtedly they were all surreptitious, that is, stolen from the playhouse, and printed without the consent of the author or the proprietors, they *in general* are preferable to the exhibition of the same plays in the

folio; for this plain reason, because, instead of printing these plays from a manuscript, the editors of the folio, to save labour, or from some other motive, printed the greater part of them from the very copies which they represented as maimed and imperfect, and frequently from a late, instead of the earliest, edition; in some instances with additions and alterations of their own. Thus therefore the first folio, as far as respects the plays above enumerated, labours under the disadvantage of being at least a second, and in some cases a third, edition of these quartos. I do not, however, mean to say, that many valuable corrections of passages undoubtedly corrupt in the quartos are not found in the folio copy; or that a single line of these plays should be printed by a careful editor without a minute examination, and collation of both copies; but those quartos were in general the basis on which the folio editors built, and are entitled to our particular attention and examination as *first* editions.

It is well known to those who are conversant with the business of the press, that, (unless when the author corrects and revises his own works,) as editions of books are multiplied, their errors are multiplied also; and that consequently every such edition is more or less correct, as it approaches nearer to or is more distant from the first. A few instances of the gradual progress of corruption will fully evince the truth of this assertion.

In the original copy of *King Richard II.* 4to. 1597, Act II. sc. ii. are these lines:

“ You promis’d, when you parted with the king,
“ To lay aside *life-harming* heaviness.”

In a subsequent quarto, printed in 1608, instead of *life-harming* we find *HALF-harming*; which being perceived by the editor of the folio to be nonsense, he substituted, instead of it,—*SELF-harming* heaviness.

In the original copy of *King Henry IV.* P. I. printed in 1598, Act IV. sc. iv. we find—

“ And what with Owen Glendower's absence thence,
“ (Who with them was a *rated sinew* too,)” &c.

In the fourth quarto printed in 1608, the article being omitted by the negligence of the compositor, and the line printed thus,—

“ Who with them was *rated sinew* too,”—

the editor of the next quarto, (which was copied by the folio,) instead of examining the first edition, amended the error (leaving the metre still imperfect) by reading—

“ Who with them was *rated firmly* too.”

So, in the same play, Act I. sc. iii. instead of the reading of the earliest copy—

“ Why what a *candy* deal of courtesy—”

caudy being printed in the first folio instead of *candy*, by the accidental inversion of the letter *n*, the editor of the second folio corrected the error by substituting *gawdy*.

So, in the same play, Act III. sc. i. instead of the reading of the earliest impression,

“ The frame and huge foundation of the earth—”

in the second and the subsequent quartos, the line by the negligence of the compositor was exhibited without the word *huge* :

“ The frame and foundation of the earth—”

and the editor of the folio, finding the metre imperfect, supplied it by reading,

“ The frame and *the* foundation of the earth.”

Another line in Act V. sc. ult. is thus exhibited in the quarto, 1598 :

“ But that the *earthy* and cold hand of death—”

Earth being printed instead of *earthy*, in the next and the subsequent quarto copies, the editor of the folio amended the line thus :

“ But that the *earth* and *the* cold hand of death—.”

Again, in the preceding scene, we find in the first copy,

“ I was not born a yielder, thou proud Scot—.”

instead of which, in the fifth quarto, 1613, we have—

“ I was not born *to yield*, thou proud Scot.”

This being the copy that was used by the editor of the folio, instead of examining the most ancient impression, he corrected the error according to his

own fancy, and probably while the work was passing through the press, by reading—

“ I was not born to *yield*, thou *haughty* Scot.”

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Juliet says to her Nurse,

“ In faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.”

and this line in the first folio being corruptly exhibited—

“ In faith, I am sorry that thou art *so* well.”

the editor of the second folio, to obtain some sense, printed—

“ In faith, I am sorry that thou art *so ill*.”

In the quarto copy of the same play, published in 1599, we find—

“————— O happy dagger, ‡
“ This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die.”

In the next quarto, 1609, the last line is thus represented :

“ 'Tis is thy sheath,” &c.

The editor of the folio, seeing that this was manifestly wrong, absurdly corrected the error thus :

“ 'Tis *in* thy sheath; there rust, and let me die.”

Again, in the same play, quarto, 1593, *mishav'd* being corruptly printed for *misbehav'd*,—

“ But like a *mishav'd* and sullen wench—”

the editor of the first folio, to obtain something like sense, reads—

“ But like a *mishap'd* and sullen wench—.”

and instead of this, the editor of the second folio, for the sake of metre, gives us—

“ But like a *mishap'd* and a sullen wench—.”

Again, in the first scene of *King Richard III.* quarto, 1597, we find this line :

“ That *tempers* him to this extremity.”

In the next quarto, and all subsequent, *tempts* is corruptly printed instead of *tempers*. The line then wanting a syllable, the editor of the folio printed it thus :

“ That *tempts* him to this *harsh* extremity.”

Not to weary my reader, I shall add but two more instances, from *Romeo and Juliet* :

“ Away to heaven, respective lenity,
“ And *fire-ey'd* fury be my conduct now !”

says Romeo, when provoked by the appearance of his rival. Instead of this, which is the reading of the quarto 1597, the line, in the quarto, 1599, is thus corruptly exhibited :

“ And fire *end* fury be my conduct now !”

In the subsequent quarto copy *and* was substituted for *end*; and accordingly in the folio the poet's fine imagery is entirely lost, and Romeo exclaims,

“ And *fire and fury* be my conduct now !”

The other instance in the same play is not less remarkable. In the quarto, 1599, the Friar, addressing Romeo, is made to say,

“ Thou *puts up* thy fortune, and thy love.”

The editor of the folio perceiving here a gross corruption, substituted these words :

“ Thou *puttest up* thy fortune, and thy love ;”

not perceiving that *up* was a misprint for *upon*, and *puts* for *pouts*, (which according to the ancient mode was written instead of *powt'st*,) as he would have found by looking into another copy without a date, and as he might have conjectured from the corresponding line in the original play printed in 1597, had he ever examined it :

“ Thou *frown'st upon* thy fate, that smiles on thee.”

So little known indeed was the value of the early impressions of books, (not revised or corrected by their authors,) that King Charles the First, though a great admirer of our poet, was contented with the *second* folio edition of his plays, unconscious of the numerous misrepresentations and interpolations by which every page of that copy is disfigured ; and in a volume of the quarto plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, which formerly belonged to that king, and is now in my collection, I did not find a single first impression. In like manner, Sir William D'Avenant, when he made his alteration of the play of *Macbeth*, appears to have used the third folio printed in 1664.⁸

⁸ In that copy *anoint* being corruptly printed instead of *aroint*,
“ *Anoint* thee, witch, the rump-fed ronyon cries.”
the error was implicitly adopted by D'Avenant.

The various readings found in the different impressions of the quarto copies are frequently mentioned by the late editors : it is obvious from what has been already stated, that the first edition of each play is alone of any authority,⁹ and accordingly to no other have I paid any attention. All the variations in the subsequent quartos were made by accident or caprice. Where, however, there are two editions printed in the same year, or an undated copy, it is necessary to examine each of them, because which of them was first, can not be ascertained; and being each printed from a manuscript, they carry with them a degree of authority to which a re-impression cannot be entitled. Of the tragedy of *King Lear* there are no less than three copies, varying from each other, printed for the same bookseller, and in the same year.

Of all the plays of which there are no quarto copies extant, the first folio, printed in 1623, is the only authentick edition.

An opinion has been entertained by some that the second impression of that book, published in 1632, has a similar claim to authenticity. "Whoever has any of the folios, (says Dr. Johnson,) has all, excepting those diversities which mere reiteration of editions will produce. I collated them all at the beginning, but afterwards used only the first, from which (he afterwards adds,) the subsequent folios never differ but by accident or negligence." Mr. Steevens, however, does not subscribe to this opinion. "The edition of 1632,

⁹ Except only in the instance of *Romeo and Juliet*, where the first copy, printed in 1597, appears to be an imperfect sketch, and therefore cannot be entirely relied on. Yet even this furnishes many valuable corrections of the more perfect copy of that tragedy in its present state, printed in 1599.

(says that gentleman,) is not without value; for though it be in some places more incorrectly printed than the preceding one, it has likewise the advantage of various readings, which are not merely such as re-iteration of copies will naturally produce."

What Dr. Johnson has stated, is not quite accurate. The second folio does indeed very frequently differ from the first by negligence or chance; but much more frequently by the editor's profound ignorance of our poet's phraseology and metre, in consequence of which there is scarce a page of the book which is not disfigured by the capricious alterations introduced by the person to whom the care of that impression was entrusted. This person in fact, whoever he was, and Mr. Pope, were the two great corrupters of our poet's text; and I have no doubt that if the arbitrary alterations introduced by these two editors were numbered, in the plays of which no quarto copies are extant, they would greatly exceed all the corruptions and errors of the press in the original and only authentic copy of those plays. Though my judgment on this subject has been formed after a very careful examination, I cannot expect that it should be received on my mere assertion: and therefore it is necessary to substantiate it by proof. This cannot be effected but by a long, minute, and what I am afraid will appear to many, an uninteresting disquisition: but let it still be remembered that to ascertain the genuine text of these plays is an object of great importance.

On a revision of the second folio printed in 1632, it will be found, that the editor of that book was entirely ignorant of our poet's phraseology and metre, and that various alterations were made by

him, in consequence of that ignorance, which render his edition of no value whatsoever.

I. His ignorance of Shakspeare's phraseology is proved by the following among many other instances.

He did not know that the double negative was the customary and authorized language of the age of Queen Elizabeth, and therefore, instead of—

“Nor to her bed *no* homage do I owe.”
Comedy of Errors, Act III. sc. ii.

he printed—

“Nor to her bed *a* homage do I owe.”

So, in *As you like it*, Act II. sc. iv. instead of—
“I can *not* go no further,” he printed—“I can go no further.”

In *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act III. sc. i. Hero, speaking of Beatrice, says,

“———— there will she hide her,
“*To listen our purpose.*”

for which the second folio substitutes—

“———— there will she hide her,
“*To listen to our purpose.*”

Again, in *The Winter's Tale*, Act I. sc. ii :

“Thou dost make possible, things not so held.”

The plain meaning is, thou dost make those things possible, which are held to be impossible. But the editor of the second folio, not understanding the line, reads—

“Thou dost make possible things not *to be* so held;”

i. e. thou dost make those things to be esteemed impossible, which are possible: the very reverse of what the poet meant.

In the same play is this line :

“ I am appointed *him* to murder you.”

Here the editor of the second folio, not being conversant with Shakspeare's irregular language, reads—

“ I *appointed him* to murder you.”

Again, in *Macbeth* :

“ This diamond he greets your wife withal,
“ By the name of most kind hostess ; and *shut up*
“ In measureless content.”

Not knowing that *shut up* meant *concluded*, the editor of the second folio reads—

“ ——— and *shut it up* [i. e. the diamond]
“ In measureless content.”

In the same play the word *lated*, (“ Now spurs the '*lated* traveller—”) not being understood, is changed to *latest*, and *Colmes-Inch* to *Colmes-hill*.

Again, *ibidem* : when Macbeth says, “ Hang those that talk of fear,” it is evident that these words are not a wish or imprecation, but an injunction to hang all the cowards in Scotland. The editor of the second folio, however, considering the passage in the former light, reads :

“ Hang them that *stand in* fear.”

From the same ignorance,

“ And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
 “ The way to *dusty* death.”

is changed to—

“ And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
 “ The way to *study* death.”

In *King Richard II.* Bolingbroke says,

“ And I must find that title in your *tongue*,” &c.

i. e. you must address me by that title. But this not being understood, *town* is in the second folio substituted for *tongue*.

The double comparative is common in the plays of Shakspeare. Yet, instead of

“ ——— I'll give my reasons
 “ *More worthier* than their voices.”
Coriolanus, Act III. sc. i. First Folio.

we have in the second copy,

“ *More worthy* than their voices.”

So, in *Othello*, Act I. sc. v.—“ opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more *safër* voice on you,”—is changed in the second folio, to—“ opinion, &c. throws a more *safê* voice on you.”

Again, in *Hamlet*, Act III. sc. ii. instead of—“ your wisdom should show itself more *richer*, to signify this to the doctor;” we find in the copy of 1632, “ ——— your wisdom should show itself more *rich*,” &c.

In *The Winter's Tale*, the word *vast* not being understood,

“ ——— they shook hands as over a *vast*.” First Folio.

we find in the second copy, "—as over a vast *sea*."

In *King John*, Act V. sc. v. first folio, are these lines:

"——— The English lords
" By his persuasion are *again* fallen off."

The editor of the second folio, thinking, I suppose, that as these lords had not *before* deserted the *French* king, it was improper to say that they had *again* fallen off, substituted "—are *at last* fallen off;" not perceiving that the meaning is, that these lords had gone back again to their own countrymen, whom they had before deserted.

In *King Henry VIII.* Act II. sc. ii. Norfolk, speaking of Wolsey, says, "I'll venture one *have* at him." This being misunderstood, is changed in the second copy to—"I'll venture one *heave* at him."

Julius Cæsar likewise furnishes various specimens of his ignorance of Shakspeare's language. The phrase, to *bear hard*, not being understood, instead of—

" Caius Ligarius doth *bear* Cæsar *hard*." First Folio.

we find in the second copy,

" Caius Ligarius doth bear Cæsar *hatred*."

and from the same cause the words *dank*, *blest*, and *hurtled*, are dismissed from the text, and more familiar words substituted in their room.¹

- ¹ " To walk unbraced, and suck up the humours
" Of the *dank* morning." First Folio.
" Of the *dark* morning." Second Folio.
" We are *blest* that Rome is rid of him." First Folio.
" We are *glad* that Rome is rid of him." Second Folio.
" The noise of battle *hurtled* in the air." First Folio.
" The noise of battle *hurried* in the air." Second Folio.

In like manner in the third Act of *Coriolanus*, sc. ii. the ancient verb to *οἶχε*, i. e. to possess, is discarded by this editor, and *οἶων* substituted in its place.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, we find in the original copy these lines :

“ ——— I say again, thy spirit
“ Is all afraid to govern thee near him,
“ But he *alway*, 'tis noble.”

Instead of restoring the true word *away*, which was thus corruptly exhibited, the editor of the second folio, without any regard to the context, altered another part of the line, and absurdly printed—
“ But he *alway is* noble.”

In the same play, Act I. sc. iii. Cleopatra says to Charmian—“ *Quick* and return ;” for which the editor of the second folio, not knowing that *quick* was either used adverbially, or elliptically for *Be quick*, substitutes—“ *Quickly*, and return.”

In *Timon of Athens*, are these lines :

“ And that unaptness made your minister
“ Thus to excuse yourself.”

i. e. and made that unaptness your minister to excuse yourself; or, in other words, availed yourself of that unaptness as an excuse for your own conduct. The words being inverted and put out of their natural order, the editor of the second folio supposed that *unaptness*, being placed first, must be the nominative case, and therefore reads—

“ And that unaptness made *you* minister,
“ Thus to excuse yourself.”

In that play, from the same ignorance, instead of Timon's exhortation to the thieves, to kill as

well as rob.—“Take wealth and *lives* together,” we find in the second copy, “Take wealth, and *live* together.” And with equal ignorance and licentiousness this editor altered the epitaph on Timon, to render it what he thought metrical, by leaving out various words. In the original edition it appears as it does in Plutarch, and therefore we may be certain that the variations in the second copy were here, as in other places, all arbitrary and capricious.

Again, in the same play, we have—

“*I defil'd land.*”

and—

“*O, my good lord, the world is but a word,*” &c.

The editor not understanding either of these passages, and supposing that *I* in the first of them was used as a personal pronoun, (whereas it stands according to the usage of that time for the affirmative particle, *ay*,) reads in the first line,

“*I defy land;*”

and exhibits the other line thus :

“*O, my good lord, the world is but a world,*” &c.

Our author and the contemporary writers generally write *wars*, not *war*, &c. The editor of the second folio being unapprised of this, reads in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act III. sc. v: “*Cæsar having made use of him in the war against Pompey,*”—instead of *wars*, the reading of the original copy.

The seventh scene of the fourth act of this play

concludes with these words: "Despatch.—Enobarbus!" Antony, who is the speaker, desires his attendant *Eros* to despatch, and then pronounces the name *Enobarbus*, who had recently deserted him, and whose loss he here laments. But there being no person on the scene but *Eros*, and the point being inadvertently omitted after the word *dispatch*, the editor of the second folio supposed that *Enobarbus* must have been an error of the press, and therefore reads:

"Dispatch, *Eros*."

In *Troilus and Cressida*, *Cressida* says,

"Things won are done; *joy's soul* lies in the doing."

i. e. the *soul of joy* lies, &c. So, "*love's visible soul*," and "*my soul of counsel*;" expressions likewise used by Shakspeare. Here also the editor of the second folio exhibits equal ignorance of his author; for instead of this eminently beautiful expression, he has given us—

"Things won are done; *the soul's joy* lies in doing."

In *King Richard III.* Ratcliff, addressing the lords at Pomfret, says,

"Make haste, the hour of death is *expiate*."

for which the editor of the second folio, alike ignorant of the poet's language and metre, has substituted,

"Make haste, the hour of death is *now expir'd*."

So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

"The earth hath swallow'd all my hopes but she."

The word *The* being accidentally omitted in the first folio, the editor of the second supplied the defect by reading—

“ Earth hath *up* swallow'd all my hopes but she.”

Again, in the same play; “ I'll lay fourteen of my teeth, and yet, to my *teen* be it spoken, I have but four:” not understanding the word *teen*, he substituted *teeth* instead of it.

Again, *ibidem*:

“ Prick'd from the lazy finger of a *maid*—”

Man being corruptly printed instead of *maid* in the first folio, 1623, the editor of the second, who never examined a single quarto copy,² corrected the error at random, by reading—

* That this editor never examined any of the quarto copies, is proved by the following instances:

In *Troilus and Cressida*, we find in the first folio:

“ ——— the remainder viands

“ We do not throw in unrespective *same*,

“ Because we now are full.”

Finding this nonsense, he printed “in unrespective *place*.” In the quarto he would have found the true word—*sieve*.

Again, in the same play, the following lines are thus corruptly exhibited:

“ That all the Greeks *begin to* worship Ajax;

“ Since things in motion *begin to* catch the eye,

“ Than what not stirs.”

the words—“ *begin to*,” being inadvertently repeated in the second line, by the compositor's eye glancing on the line above.

The editor of the second folio, instead of examining the quarto, where he would have found the true reading:

“ Since things in motion *sooner* catch the eye.”

thought only of amending the metre, and printed the line thus:

“ Since things in motion '*gin to* catch the eye—”

leaving the passage nonsense, as he found it.

So, in *Titus Andronicus*:

“ And let no *comfort* delight mine ear—”

“ Prick'd from the lazy finger of a woman.”

Again :

“ Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say, ay:”

The word *me* being omitted in the first folio, the editor of the second capriciously supplied the metre thus :

being erroneously printed in the first folio, instead of “ And let no *comforter*,” &c. the editor of the second folio corrected the error according to his fancy, by reading—

“ And let no *comfort else* delight mine ear.”

So, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Vol. VII. p. 96: “ Old Mantuan, who understands thee not, *loves thee not*.” The words in the Italick character being inadvertently omitted in the first folio, the editor of the second folio, instead of applying to the quarto to cure the defect, printed the passage just as he found it: and in like manner in the same play implicitly followed the error of the first folio, which has been already mentioned,—

“ O, that your face were so full of O's—”

though the omission of the word *not*, which is found in the quarto, made the passage nonsense.

So, in *Much Ado about Nothing* :

“ And I will break with her. Was't not to this end,” &c. being printed instead of—

“ And I will break with her *and with her father*,

“ *And thou shalt have her*. Was't not to this end,” &c.

the error, which arose from the compositor's eye glancing from one line to the other, was implicitly adopted in the second folio.

Again, in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* :

“ *Ah me*, for aught that I could ever read,

“ Could ever hear,” &c.

the words *Ah me* being accidentally omitted in the first folio, instead of applying to the quarto for the true reading, he supplied the defect, according to his own fancy, thus :

“ *Hermia*, for aught that I could ever read,” &c.

Again, in *The Merchant of Venice*, he arbitrarily gives us—

“ The ewe bleat for the lamb *when you behold*,”

instead of—

“ *Why he hath made* the ewe bleat for the lamb.”

See p. 454. Innumerable other instances of the same kind might be produced.

“Dost thou love? O, I know thou wilt say, ay.”

This expletive, we shall presently find, when I come to speak of the poet's metre, was his constant expedient in all difficulties.

In *Measure for Measure* he printed *ignominy* instead of *ignomy*, the reading of the first folio, and the common language of the time. In the same play, from his ignorance of the constable's humour, he corrected his phraseology, and substituted *instant* for *distant*; (“— at that very distant time:”) and in like manner he makes Dogberry, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, exhort the watch not to be *vigitant*, but *vigilant*.

Among the marks of love, Rosalind, in *As you like it*, mentions “a beard neglected, which you have not;—but I pardon you for that; for, simply, your *having in* beard is a younger brother's revenue.” Not understanding the meaning of the word *having*, this editor reads—“your having *no* beard,” &c.

In *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Pyramus says,

“I *see* a voice; now will I to the chink,
“To spy an' I can *hear* my Thisby's face.”

Of the humour of this passage he had not the least notion, for he printed, instead of it,

“I *hear* a voice; now will I to the chink,
“To spy an' I can *see* my Thisby's face.”

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Act I. sc. i. we find in the first folio,

“And out of doubt you do more wrong—”

which the editor of the second perceiving to be imperfect, he corrected at random thus :

“ And out of doubt you do *to me* more wrong.”

Had he consulted the original quarto, he would have found that the poet wrote—

“ And out of doubt you do *me now* more wrong.”

So, in the same play,—“ But *of* mine, then yours,” being corruptly printed instead of—“ But *if* mine, then yours,” this editor arbitrarily reads—“ But *first* mine, then yours.”

Again, *ibidem* :

“ Or even as well use question with the wolf,
“ The ewe bleat for the lamb.”

the words “ *Why he hath made*” being omitted in the first folio at the beginning of the second line, the second folio editor supplied the defect thus absurdly :

“ Or even as well use question with the wolf,
“ The ewe bleat for the lamb *when you behold*.”

In *Othello* the word *snipe* being misprinted in the first folio,

“ If I should time expend with such a *snpe*.”

the editor not knowing what to make of it, substituted *swain* instead of the corrupted word.

Again, in the same play,

“ *For* of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted.”

being printed in the first folio instead of—“ *Forth* of my heart,” &c. which was the common language of the time, the editor of the second folio amended the error according to his fancy, by reading—

“ *For off my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted.*”

Again, in the same play, Act V. sc. i. not understanding the phraseology of our author's time,

“ Who's there? Whose noise is this, that *cries on* murder?”

he substituted—

“ Whose noise is this, that *cries out* murder?”

and in the first Act of the same play, not perceiving the force of an eminently beautiful epithet, for “ *desarts idle*,” he has given us “ *desarts wild*.”

Again, in that tragedy we find—

“ ————— what charms,
 “ What conjuration, and what mighty magick,
 “ (For such proceeding I am charg'd withal,)
 “ I won his daughter.”

that is, I won his daughter *with*; and so the editor of the second folio reads, not knowing that this kind of elliptical expression frequently occurs in this author's works, as I have shown in a note on the last scene of *Cymbeline*, and in other places.³

In like manner he has corrupted the following passage in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* :

“ So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
 “ Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
 “ Unto his lordship, *whose unwished* yoke
 “ My soul consents not to give sovereignty.”

i. e. to give sovereignty *to*. Here too this editor has unnecessarily tampered with the text, and

³ See Vol. XVIII. p. 647, n. 2; Vol. XV. p. 196, n. 4; and Vol. XIX. p. 266, n. 7.

having contracted the word *unwished*, he exhibited the line thus :

“ Unto his lordship, *to* whose *unwish'd* yoke
 “ My soul consents not to give sovereignty.”

an interpolation which was adopted in the subsequent copies, and which, with all the modern editors, I incautiously suffered to remain in the present edition.⁴

The grave-digger in *Hamlet* observes “ that your tanner will last you nine *year*,” and such is the phraseology which Shakspeare always attributes to his lower characters ; but instead of this, in the second folio, we find—“ nine *years*.”

“ Your skill shall, like a star i'the *darkest* night,
 “ Stick fiery off indeed.—”

says Hamlet to Laertes. But the editor of the second folio, conceiving, I suppose, that if a star appeared with extraordinary scintillation, the night must necessarily be luminous, reads—“ i'the *brightest* night :” and, with equal sagacity, not acquiescing in Edgar's notion of “ *four-inch'd* bridges,” this editor has furnished him with a much safer pass, for he reads—“ *four-arch'd* bridges.”

In *King Henry VIII.* are these lines :

“ ——— If we did think
 “ His *contemplation* were above the earth—”

Not understanding this phraseology, and supposing that *were* must require a noun in the plural number, he reads :

⁴ See Vol. IV. p. 322, n. 7.

“ ——— If we did think
 “ His *contemplations* were above the earth,” &c.

Again, in *Troilus and Cressida*, Act IV. sc. ii :

“ With wings more *momentary-swift* than thought.”

This compound epithet not being understood, he reads :

“ With wings more *momentary, swifter* than thought.”

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Act I. sc. ii. Hortensio, describing Catharine, says,

“ Her only fault (and that is—*faults* enough)
 “ Is,—that she is intolerable curst;—”

meaning, that this one was a *host of faults*. But this not being comprehended by the editor of the second folio, with a view, doubtless, of rendering the passage more grammatical, he substituted—
 “ and that is *fault* enough.”

So, in *King Lear*, we find—“ Do you know this noble gentleman?” But this editor supposing, it should seem, that a gentleman could not be noble, or that a noble could not be a gentleman, instead of the original text, reads—“ Do you know this *nobleman?*”

In *Measure for Measure*, Act II. sc. i. Escalus, addressing the Justice, says, “ I pray you home to dinner with me :” this familiar diction not being understood, we find in the second folio, “ I pray you *go* home to dinner with me.” And in *Othello*, not having sagacity enough to see that *apines* was printed by a mere transposition of the letters, for *paines*,

“ Though I do hate him, as I do hell *apines*,”

instead of correcting the word, he evaded the difficulty by omitting it, and exhibited the line in an imperfect state.

The Duke of York, in the third part of *King Henry VI.* exclaims,

“ That face of his the hungry cannibals
 “ Would not have touch'd, would not have stain'd with
 blood.”

These lines being thus carefully arranged in the first folio :

“ That face of his
 “ The hungry cannibals would not have touch'd,
 “ Would not have stain'd with blood—”

the editor of the second folio, leaving the first line imperfect as he found it, completed the last line by this absurd interpolation :

“ Would not have stain'd *the roses just* with blood.”

These are but a few of the numerous corruptions and interpolations found in that copy, from the editor's ignorance of Shakspeare's phraseology.

II. Let us now examine how far he was acquainted with the metre of these plays.

In *The Winter's Tale*, Act III. sc. ii. we find—

“ What wheels? racks? fires? what flaying? boiling?
 “ In leads, or oils?”—

Not knowing that *fires* was used as a dissyllable, he added the word *burning* at the end of the line :

“ What wheels? racks? fires? what flaying? boiling?
burning?”

So again, in *Julius Cæsar*, Act III. sc. ii. from the same ignorance, the word *all* has been interpolated by this editor :

“ And with the brands *fire all* the traitors' houses.”

instead of the reading of the original and authentic copy,

“ And with the brands *fire* the traitors' houses.”

Again, in *Macbeth* :

“ I would, while it was smiling in my face,
“ Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
“ And dash'd the brains out, had I so *sworn*
“ As you have done to this.”

Not perceiving that *sworn* was used as a dissyllable, he reads—“ had I *but* so sworn.”

Charms our poet sometimes uses as a word of two syllables. Thus, in *The Tempest*, Act I. sc. ii :

“ Curs'd be I, that did so! All the *charms*,” &c.

instead of which this editor gives us,

“ Curs'd be I, that *I* did so ! All the charms,” &c.

Hour is almost always used by Shakspeare as a dissyllable, but of this the editor of the second folio was ignorant ; for instead of these lines in *King Richard II* :

“ —— So sighs, and tears, and groans,
“ Show minutes, times, and *hours* : but my time
“ Runs posting on,” &c.

he gives us—

“ ——— So sighs, and tears, and groans,
“ Show minutes, times, and hours : *O* but my time,”^a &c.

So again, in *The Comedy of Errors* :

“ I'll meet you in that place, some *hour*, *sir*, hence.”

instead of the original reading,

“ I'll meet you in that place some *hour* hence.”

Again, in *The Winter's Tale*, Act I. sc. ii :

“ ——— wishing clocks more swift?
“ Hours, minutes? *the* noon, midnight? and all eyes,” &c.

instead of the original reading,

“ Hours, minutes? noon, midnight? and all eyes,” &c.

Again, in *All's well that ends well*, Act II. sc. iii :

^a In *Measure for Measure* we find these lines :

“ ——— Merciful heaven !
“ Thou rather, with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt,
“ Split'st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak,
“ Than the soft mirtle ;—But man, proud man,” &c.

There can be no doubt that a word was omitted in the last line ; perhaps some epithet to *mirtle*. But the editor of the second folio, resorting to his usual expedient, absurdly reads :

“ Than the soft mirtle. *O* but man, proud man,—”

So, in *Titus Andronicus*, Act III. sc. ii: *complaynet* being corruptly printed instead of *complayner*,

“ Speechless *complaynet*, I will learn thy thoughts,—”

this editor, with equal absurdity, reads :

“ Speechless *complaint*, *O*, I will learn thy thoughts.”

I have again and again had occasion to mention in the notes on these plays, that *omission* is of all the errors of the press that which most frequently happens. On collating the fourth edition of *King Richard III.* printed in 1612, with the second printed in 1598, I found no less than *twenty-six* words omitted.

“ Which challenges itself as honours born,
 “ And is not like the *sire*. Honours thrive,” &c.

This editor, not knowing that *sire* was used as a dissyllable, reads :

“ And is not like the *sire*. Honours *best* thrive,” &c.

So, in *King Henry VI.* P. I :

“ Rescued is Orleans from the *English*.”

Not knowing that *English* was used as a trisyllable, he has completed the line, which he supposed defective, according to his own fancy, and reads :

“ Rescu'd is Orleans from the English *wolves*.”

The same play furnishes us with various other proofs of his ignorance of our poet's metre. Thus, instead of

“ Orleans the bastard, Charles, Burgundy,—”

he has printed (not knowing that *Charles* was used as a word of two syllables,)

“ Orleans the bastard, Charles, *and* Burgundy.”

So, instead of the original reading,

“ Divinest creature, Astræa's daughter,—”

(*Astræa* being used as a word of three syllables,) he has printed—

“ Divinest creature, *bright* Astræa's daughter.”

Again, *ibidem* :

“ Whereas the contrary bringeth bliss.”

Not knowing that *contrary* was used as a word of four syllables, he reads :

“ Whereas the contrary bringeth *forth* bliss.”

So *sure* is used in the same play, as a dissyllable :

“ Gloster, we'll meet: to thy cost, be *sure*.”

but this editor, not aware of this, reads :

“ Gloster, we'll meet ; to thy *dear* cost, be *sure*.”

Again, in *King Henry VI.* P. II.

“ And so to *arms*, victorious father,—”

arms being used as a dissyllable. But the second folio reads :

“ And so to *arms*, victorious *noble* father.”

Again, in *Twelfth-Night*, Act I. sc. i. we find—

“ ———— when liver, brain, and heart,
“ These sovereign thrones, are all supply'd, and fill'd,
“ (Her sweet *perfections*) with one self-king.”

for which the editor, not knowing that *perfections* was used as a quadrisyllable, has substituted—

“ ———— when liver, brain, and heart,
“ These sovereign thrones, are all supply'd, and fill'd,
“ (Her sweet *perfections*) with one *self-same* king.”

Again, in *King Henry VI.* P. II :

“ Prove it, *Henry*, and thou shalt be king.”

for which the editor of the second folio, not knowing *Henry* to be used as a trisyllable, gives us,

“ *But* prove it, *Henry*, and thou shalt be king.”

In like manner *dazzled* is used by Shakspeare as a trisyllable in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act II. sc. iv:

“ And that hath *dazzled* my reason's light.”

instead of which, we find in the second folio,

“ And that hath *dazzled so* my reason's light.”

The words *neither*, *rather*, &c. are frequently used by Shakspeare as words of one syllable. So, in *King Henry VI.* P. III:

“ And *neither* by treason, nor hostility,
“ To seek to put me down—.”

for which the editor of the second folio has given us,

“ Neither by treason, nor hostility,” &c.

In *Timon of Athens*, Act III. sc. v. Alcibiades asks,

“ Is this the balsam, that the usuring senate
“ *Pours* into captains' wounds? banishment?”

The editor of the second folio, not knowing that *pours* was used as a dissyllable, to complete the supposed defect in the metre, reads:

“ Is this the balsam, that the usuring senate
“ *Pours* into captains' wounds! *ha!* banishment?”

Tickled is often used by Shakspeare and the contemporary poets, as a word of three syllables. So, in *King Henry VI.* P. II:

“ She's *tickled* now; her fume *needs* no spurs.”

instead of which, in the second folio we have,—

“ She's tickled now ; her fume *can need no spurs.*”

So, in *Titus Andronicus*, Act II. sc. i :

“ Better than he have *worn* Vulcan's badge.”

This editor, not knowing that *worn* was used as a dissyllable, reads :

“ Better than he have *yet worn* Vulcan's badge.”

Again, in *Cymbeline*, Act II. sc. v :

“ All faults that name, nay, that hell knows, why hers,
“ In part, or all ; but rather all : for even to vice,” &c.

These lines being thus carelessly distributed in the original copy,—

“ All faults that name, nay, that hell knows,
“ Why hers, in part, or all ; but rather all :” &c.

the editor of the second folio, to supply the defect of the first line, arbitrarily reads, with equal ignorance of his author's metre and phraseology,

“ All faults that *may be named*, nay, that hell knows,
“ Why hers,” &c.

In *King Henry IV.* P. II. Act I. sc. iii. is this line :

“ And being now trimm'd in thine own desires,—.”

instead of which the editor of the second folio, to remedy a supposed defect in the metre, has given us—

“ And being now trimm'd *up* in thine own desires,—.”

Again, in *As you like it*, Act II. sc. i :

“ ——— he pierceth through
“ The body of city, country, court,—.”

instead of which we find in the second folio, (the editor not knowing that *country* was used as a trisyllable,)

“ ————— he pierceth through
“ The body of city, *the* country, court.”

In like manner, in *The Winter's Tale*, Act I. sc. i. he has given us :

“ ————— we knew not
“ The doctrine of ill-doing, *no* nor dream'd
“ That any did :—”

instead of—

“ ————— we knew not
“ The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dream'd,” &c.

doctrine being used as a word of three syllables.

“ Pay him six thousand,” &c. says Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*,

“ Before a friend of this description
“ Should lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.”

the word *hair* being used as a dissyllable, or *Bassanio* as a quadrisyllable. Of this the editor of the second folio was wholly ignorant, and therefore reads :

“ Should lose a hair through *my* Bassanio's fault.”

In *The Winter's Tale*, Act IV. sc. iii. Florizel, addressing Perdita, says,

“ ————— my desires
“ Run not before mine honour ; nor my lusts
“ *Burn* hotter than my faith.”

To complete the last hemistich, Perdita is made to reply,

“ O but, sir,
“ Your resolution cannot hold.”

Here again this editor betrays his ignorance of Shakspeare's metre; for not knowing that *burn* was used as a dissyllable, he reads—

“ O but, *dear sir*,” &c.

Again, in *King Henry VIII.* Act II. sc. iii. the Old Lady declares to Anne Boleyn,

“ 'Tis strange; a three-pence bow'd would *hire* me,
“ Old as I am, to queen it.”

But instead of this, *hire* not being perceived to be used as a word of two syllables, we find in the second folio,

“ 'Tis strange; a three-pence bow'd *now* would hire me,” &c.

This editor, indeed, was even ignorant of the author's manner of accenting words, for in *The Tempest*, where we find,

“ ——— Spirits, which by mine art
“ I have from their *confines* call'd to enact
“ My present fancies,—”

he exhibits the second line thus :

“ I have from *all* their *cónfines* call'd to enact,” &c.

Again, in *King Lear*, Act II. sc. i. instead of—

“ To have the expence and waste of *his* révénués,—”

the latter word, being, I suppose, differently accented after our poet's death, the editor of the second folio has given us,

“ To have the expence and waste of révénués.”

Various other instances of the same kind might be produced; but that I may not weary my readers, I will only add, that no person who wishes to peruse the plays of Shakspeare should ever open the Second Folio, or either of the subsequent copies, in which all these capricious alterations were adopted, with many additional errors and innovations.

It may seem strange, that the person to whom the care of supervising the second folio was assigned, should have been thus ignorant of our poet's language: but it should be remembered, that in the beginning of the reign of Charles the First many words and modes of speech began to be disused, which had been common in the age of Queen Elizabeth. The editor of the second folio was probably a young man, perhaps born in the year 1600. That Sir William D'Avenant, who was born in 1605, did not always perfectly understand our author's language, is manifest from various alterations which he has made in some of his pieces. The successive Chronicles of English history, which were compiled between the years 1540 and 1630, afford indubitable proofs of the gradual change in our phraseology during that period. Thus a narrative which Hall exhibits in what now appears to us as very uncouth and ancient diction, is again exhibited by Holinshed, about forty years afterwards, in somewhat a less rude form; and in the chronicles of Speed and Baker in 1611 and 1630, assumes a somewhat more polished air. In the second edition of Gascoigne's Poems printed in 1587, the editor thought it necessary to explain many of the words by placing more familiar terms in the margin, though not much more than twenty years had

elapsed from the time of their composition: so rapid were at that time the changes in our language.

My late friend Mr. Tyrwhitt, a man of such candour, accuracy, and profound learning, that his death must be considered as an irreparable loss to literature, was of opinion, that in printing these plays the original spelling should be adhered to, and that we never could be sure of a perfectly faithful edition, unless the first folio copy was made the standard, and actually sent to the press, with such corrections as the editor might think proper. By others it was suggested, that the notes should not be subjoined to the text, but placed at the end of each volume, and that they should be accompanied by a complete Glossary. The former scheme (that of sending the first folio to the press) appeared to me liable to many objections; and I am confident that if the notes were detached from the text, many readers would remain uninformed, rather than undergo the trouble occasioned by perpetual references from one part of a volume to another.

In the present edition I have endeavoured to obtain all the advantages which would have resulted from Mr. Tyrwhitt's plan, without any of its inconveniences. Having often experienced the fallaciousness of collation by the eye, I determined, after I had adjusted the text in the best manner in my power, to have every proof-sheet of my work read aloud to me, while I perused the first folio, for those plays which first appeared in that edition; and for all those which had been previously printed, the first quarto copy, excepting only in the instances of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *King Henry V.* which, being either sketches

or imperfect copies, could not be wholly relied on; and *King Richard III.*⁶ of the earliest edition of which tragedy I was not possessed. I had at the same time before me a table which I had formed of the variations between the quartos and the folio. By this laborious process not a single innovation, made either by the editor of the second folio, or any of the modern editors, could escape me. From the Index to all the words and phrases explained or illustrated in the notes, which I have subjoined to this work,⁷ every use may be derived which the most copious Glossary could afford; while those readers who are less intent on philological inquiries, by the notes being appended to the text, are relieved from the irksome task of seeking information in a different volume from that immediately before them.

If it be asked, what has been the fruit of all this labour, I answer, that many innovations, transpositions, &c. have been detected by this means; many hundred emendations have been made,⁸ and, I trust,

⁶ At the time the tragedy of *King Richard III.* was in the press, I was obliged to make use of the *second* edition printed in 1598; but have since been furnished with the edition of 1597, which I have collated *verbatim*, and the most material variations are noticed in the Appendix.

⁷ If the explication of any word or phrase should appear unsatisfactory, the reader, by turning to the Glossarial Index, may know at once whether any additional information has been obtained on the subject. Thus, in *Macbeth*, Vol. IV. p. 392, Dr. Warburton's erroneous interpretation of the word *blood-bolter'd* is inserted; but the true explication of that provincial term may be found in the APPENDIX. So of the phrase, "*Will you take eggs for money*" in *The Winter's Tale*; and some others.

⁸ Lest this assertion should be supposed to be made without evidence, I subjoin a list of the restorations made from the original copy, and supported by contemporary usage, in two plays only; *The Winter's Tale* and *King John*. The lines in the Italic character are exhibited as they appear in the edition of 1778,

a genuine text has been formed. Wherever any (as being much more correctly printed than that of 1785,) those in the common character as they appear in the present edition (i. e. Mr. Malone's, in ten volumes).

THE WINTER'S TALE.

1. " ——— *I'll give you my commission,
To let him there a month.*" P. 293.
" ——— *I'll give him my commission,
To let him there a month.*" P. 125.
2. " ——— *we know not
The doctrine of ill-doing, no, nor dream'd—*" P. 295.
" ——— *we know not
The doctrine of ill-doing; nor dream'd—*" P. 126.
3. " *As o'er-dy'd blacks, as winds, as waters;—*" P. 300.
" *As o'er-dy'd blacks, as wind, as waters;—*" P. 130.
4. " *As ornament oft does.*" P. 302.
" *As ornaments oft do.*" P. 130.

The original copy, with a disregard of grammar, reads—" *As ornaments oft does.*" This inaccuracy has been constantly corrected by every editor, wherever it occurs; but the correction should always be made in the verb, and not in the noun.

5. " *Have you not—thought (for cogitation
Resides not in the man that does not think it)
My wife is slippery?"* P. 408.
" *Have you not—thought (for cogitation
Resides not in the man that does not think)
My wife is slippery?"* P. 138.
6. " ——— *wishing clocks more swift?
Hours, minutes, the noon midnight? and all eyes,—*"
P. 408.
" ——— *wishing clocks more swift?
Hours minutes? noon midnight? and all eyes,—*"
P. 139.
7. " ——— *Ay, and thou,—who may'st see
How I am gall'd—thou might'st be-spice a cup,—*"
P. 309.
" ——— *Ay, and thou,—who may'st see
How I am galled,—might'st be-spice a cup,—*"
P. 140.
8. " ——— *I'll keep my stable where
I lodge my wife;—*" P. 325.

deviation is made from the authentick copies,

- “ I'll keep my *stables* where
 “ I lodge my wife ;—” P. 153.
9. “ *Relish as truth like us.*” P. 317.
 “ *Relish a truth like us.*” P. 156.
10. “ *And I beseech you, hear me, who profess—*” P. 333.
 “ *And I beseech you hear me, who professes—*” P. 162.
11. “ *This session to our great grief,—*” P. 343.
 “ *This sessions to our great grief,—*” P. 170.
12. “ *The bug which you will fright me with, I seek.*”
 P. 347.
 “ *The bug which you would fright me with, I seek.*”
 P. 175.
13. “ *You here shall swear upon the sword of justice,—*”
 P. 349.
 “ *You here shall swear upon this sword of justice,—*”
 P. 177.
14. “ *The session shall proceed.*” P. 349.
 “ *The sessions shall proceed.*” P. 178.
15. “ *Which you knew great ; and to the certain hazard*
 “ *Of all incertainties—*” P. 350.
 “ *Which you knew great, and to the hazard*
 “ *Of all incertainties—*” P. 179.

Some word was undoubtedly omitted at the press ; (probably *fearful* or *doubtful* ;) but I thought it better to exhibit the line in an imperfect state, than to adopt the interpolation made by the editor of the second folio, who has introduced perhaps as unfit a word as could have been chosen.

16. “ *Through my dark rust ! and how his piety—*” P. 360.
 “ *Thorough my rust ! and how his piety—*” P. 179.

The first word of the line is in the old copy by the mistake of the compositor printed *Through*.

17. “ *O but dear sir,—*” P. 375.
 “ *O but, sir,—*” P. 200.
18. “ *Your discontenting father I'll strive to qualify,—*”
 P. 401.
 “ *Your discontenting father strive to qualify,—*” P. 224.
19. “ *If I thought it were not a piece of honesty to acquaint*
the king withal, I would do it.” P. 407.
 “ *If I thought it were a piece of honesty to acquaint the*
king withal, I'd not do it.” P. 229.

except in the case of mere obvious errors of the

20. "Dost thou think, for that I insinuate or toze—" P. 402.
 "Dost thou think, for that I insinuate *and* toze—" P. 231.
21. "You might have spoke a thousand things,—" P. 414.
 "You might have *spoken* a thousand things,—" P. 235.
22. "Where we offend her now, appear—" P. 417.
 "Where we *offenders* now appear—" P. 237.
23. "Once more to look on.
 "Sir, *by his command*,—" P. 420.
 "Once more to look on *him*.
 "By his command,—" P. 240.
24. "—— like a weather-beaten conduit." P. 425.
 "—— like a weather-bitten conduit." P. 246.
25. "—— This your son-in-law,
 "And son unto the king, who, heavens directing,
 "Is troth-plight to your daughter." P. 437.
 "—— This your son-in-law,
 "And son unto the king, (*whom* heavens directing,)
 "Is troth-plight to your daughter." P. 257.

KING JOHN.

1. "Which fault lies on the hazard of all husbands." P. 10.
 "Which fault lies on the *hazards* of all husbands." P. 451.
2. "'Tis too *respective*, and too *sociable*,
 "For your *conversing*." P. 14.
 "'Tis too *respective*, and too *sociable*,
 "For your *conversion*." P. 456.
3. "Thus *leaning on my elbow*,—" P. 16.
 "Thus *leaning on mine elbow*,—" P. 457.
4. "With them a *bastard of the king deceas'd*." P. 25.
 "With them a *bastard of the king's deceas'd*." P. 464.
5. "That thou hast *under-wrought its lawful king*." P. 26.
 "That thou hast *under-wrought his lawful king*." P. 465.
6. "Say, shall the *current of our right* run on?" P. 37.
 "Say, shall the *current of our right roam* on?" P. 476.

press,⁹ the reader is apprized by a note; and every

7. " *And now he feasts, mouthing the flesh of men,—*"
P. 38.
" *And now he feasts, mousing the flesh of men,—*"
P. 477.
8. " *A greater power than ye—*" P. 39.
" *A greater power than we—*" P. 478.

⁹ That I may be accurately understood, I subjoin a few of these unnoticed corrections:

In *King Henry VI.* P. I. Act I. sc. vi:

" Thy promises are like Adonis' *gardens*,

" That one day bloom'd, and fruitful were the next."

The old copy reads—*garden*.

In *King John*, Act IV. sc. ii:

" ——— that close aspect of his

" *Does* shew the mood of a much-troubled breast."

The old copy reads—*Do*.

Ibidem, Act I. sc. i:

" 'Tis too respectful, and too sociable," &c.

The old copy,—'Tis *two* respectful," &c.

Again, in the same play, we find in the original copy:

" Against the *inuoluerable* clouds of heaven."

In *King Henry V.* Act V. sc. ii:

" Corrupting in *its* own fertility."

The old copy reads—*it*.

In *Timon of Athens*, Act I. sc. i:

" *Come*, shall we in?"

The old copy has—*Comes*.

Ibidem: " Even on their knees, and *hands*,—"

The old copy has—*hand*.

In *Cymbeline*, Act III. sc. iv:

" The handmaids of all women, or, more truly,

" Woman *its* pretty self."

The old copy has—*it*.

It cannot be expected that the page should be encumbered with the notice of such obvious mistakes of the press as are here enumerated. With the exception of errors such as these, whenever any emendation has been adopted, it is mentioned in a note, and ascribed to its author.

emendation that has been adopted, is ascribed to its proper author. When it is considered that

9. " *For grief is proud, and makes his owner stoop.*" P. 52.
" *For grief is proud, and makes his owner stout.*" P. 492.
10. " *O, that a man would speak these words to me!*" P. 52.
" *O, that a man should speak these words to me!*" P. 497.
11. " *Is't not amiss, when it is truly done?*" P. 64.
" *Is not amiss, when it is truly done.*" P. 504.
12. " *Then, in despite of broad-ey'd watchful day,—*" P. 72.
" *Then, in despite of brooded watchful day,—*" P. 512.
13. " *A whole armado of collected sail.*" P. 74.
" *A whole armado of convicted sail.*" P. 514.
14. " *And bitter shame hath spoil'd the sweet world's taste.*" P. 79.
" *And bitter shame hath spoil'd the sweet word's taste.*" P. 519.
15. " *Strong reasons make strong actions.*" P. 81.
" *Strong reasons make strange actions.*" P. 522.
16. " *Must make a stand at what your highness will.*" P. 89.
" *Doth make a stand at what your highness will.*" P. 530.
17. " *Had none, my lord! why, did not you provoke me?*" P. 96.
" *Had none, my lord! why, did you not provoke me?*" P. 536.
18. " *Mad'st it no conscience to destroy a king.*" P. 97.
" *Made it no conscience to destroy a king.*" P. 537.
19. " *Sir, sir, impatience has its privilege.*" P. 102.
" *Sir, sir, impatience has his privilege.*" P. 541.
20. " *Or, when he doom'd this beauty to the grave,—*" P. 102.
" *Or, when he doom'd this beauty to a grave,—*" P. 541.

there are one hundred thousand lines in these plays, and that it often was necessary to consult

21. " *To the yet-unbegotten sins of time.*" P. 102.
 " *To the yet-unbegotten sin of times.*" P. 541.
22. " *And breathing to this breathless excellence,—*" P. 102.
 " *And breathing to his breathless excellence,—*"
 P. 542.
23. " *And your supplies, which you have wish'd so long,—*"
 P. 121.
 " *And your supply, which you have wish'd so long,—*"
 P. 561.
24. " *What's that to thee? Why may I not demand—*"
 P. 122.
 " *What's that to thee? Why may not I demand—*"
 P. 562.
25. " *O, my sweet sir, news fitted to the night.*" P. 123.
 " *O, my sweet sir, news fitting to the night.*" P. 563.
26. " *Death, having prey'd upon the outward parts,*
Leaves them; invisible his siege is now
Against the mind,—" P. 124.
 " *Death, having prey'd upon the outward parts,*
Leaves them invisible; and his siege is now
Against the mind,—" P. 565.
27. " *The salt of them is hot.*" P. 125.
 " *The salt in them is hot.*" P. 568.

Two other restorations in this play I have not set down:

- and— " *Before we will lay down our just-borne arms—*"
 Act II. sc. ii.
 " *Be these sad signs confirmers of thy word.*"
 Act III. sc. i.

because I pointed them out on a former occasion.

It may perhaps be urged that some of the variations in these lists, are of no great consequence; but to preserve our poet's genuine text is certainly important; for otherwise, as Dr. Johnson has justly observed, "the history of our language will be lost;" and as our poet's words are changed, we are constantly in danger of losing his meaning also. Every reader must wish to peruse what Shakspeare wrote, supported at once by the authority of the authentick copies, and the usage of his contemporaries, rather than what the editor of the second folio, or Pope, or Hanmer, or Warburton, have arbitrarily substituted in its place.

six or seven volumes, in order to ascertain by which of the preceding editors, from the time of the publication of the second folio, each emendation was made, it will easily be believed, that this was not effected without much trouble.

Whenever I mention *the old copy* in my notes, if the play be one originally printed in quarto, I mean the first quarto copy; if the play appeared originally in folio, I mean the first folio; and when I mention the old copies, I mean the first quarto and first folio, which, when that expression is used, it may be concluded, concur in the same reading. In like manner, *the folio* always means the first folio, and *the quarto*, the earliest quarto, with the exceptions already mentioned. In general, however, the date of each quarto is given, when it is cited. Where there are two quarto copies printed in the same year, they are particularly distinguished, and the variations noticed.

The two great duties of an editor are, to exhibit the genuine text of his author, and to explain his obscurities. Both of these objects have been so constantly before my eyes, that, I am confident, one of them will not be found to have been neglected for the other. I can with perfect truth say, with Dr. Johnson, that "not a single passage in the whole work has appeared to me obscure, which I have not endeavoured to illustrate." I have examined the notes of all the editors, and my own

Let me not, however, be misunderstood. *All* these variations have not been discovered by the present collation, some of them having been pointed out by preceding editors; but such as had been already noticed were merely pointed out: the original readings are now established and supported by the usage of our poet himself and that of his contemporaries, and restored to the text, instead of being degraded to the bottom of the page.

former remarks, with equal rigour; and have endeavoured as much as possible to avoid all controversy, having constantly had in view a philanthropic observation made by the editor above mentioned: "I know not (says that excellent writer,) why our editors should, with such implacable anger, persecute their predecessors. Οἱ νεκροὶ μὴ λάχουσιν, the dead, it is true, can make no resistance, they may be attacked with great security; but since they can neither feel nor mend, the safety of mauling them seems greater than the pleasure: nor perhaps would it much misbeseem us to remember, amidst our triumphs over the *nonsensical* and the *senseless*, that we likewise are men; that *debemur morti*, and, as Swift observed to Burnet, shall soon be among the dead ourselves."

I have in general given the true explication of a passage, by whomsoever made, without loading the page with the preceding unsuccessful attempts at elucidation, and by this means have obtained room for much additional illustration: for, as on the one hand, I trust very few superfluous or unnecessary annotations have been admitted, so on the other, I believe, that not a single valuable explication of any obscure passage in these plays has ever appeared, which will not be found in the following volumes.

The admirers of this poet will, I trust, not merely pardon the great accession of new notes in the present edition, but examine them with some degree of pleasure. An idle notion has been propagated, that Shakspeare has been *buried under his commentators*; and it has again and again been repeated by the tasteless and the dull, "that notes, though often necessary, are *necessary evils*." There is no person, I believe, who has an higher respect

for the authority of Dr. Johnson than I have ; but he has been misunderstood, or misrepresented, as if these words contained a general caution to *all* the readers of this poet. Dr. Johnson, in the part of his preface here alluded to, is addressing the *young* reader, to whom Shakspeare is *new*; and him he very judiciously counsels to “read every play from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators.—Let him read on, through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption ; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue, and his interest in the fable.” But to much the greater and more enlightened part of his readers, (for how few are there comparatively to whom Shakspeare is new?) he gives a very different advice : Let them to whom the pleasures of novelty have ceased, “attempt exactness, and read the commentators.”

During the era of conjectural criticism and capricious innovation, notes were indeed evils ; while one page was covered with ingenious sophistry in support of some idle conjecture, and another was wasted in its overthrow, or in erecting a new fabrick equally unsubstantial as the former. But this era is now happily past away ; and conjecture and emendation have given place to rational explanation. We shall never, I hope, again be told, that “as the best guesser was the best diviner, so he may be said in some measure to be the best editor of Shakspeare.”¹ Let me not, however, be supposed an enemy to all conjectural emendation ; sometimes undoubtedly we must have recourse to it ; but, like the machinery of the ancient drama, let it not be resorted to except in cases of difficulty ;

¹ Newton's Preface to his edition of Milton,

nisi dignus vindici nodus. “I wish (says Dr. Johnson) we all conjectured less, and explained more.” When our poet’s entire library shall have been discovered, and the fables of all his plays traced to their original source, when every temporary allusion shall have been pointed out, and every obscurity elucidated, then, and not till then, let the accumulation of notes be complained of. I scarcely remember ever to have looked into a book of the age of Queen Elizabeth, in which I did not find somewhat that tended to throw a light on these plays. While our object is, to support and establish what the poet wrote, to illustrate his phraseology by comparing it with that of his contemporaries, and to explain his fugitive allusions to customs long since disused and forgotten, while this object is kept steadily in view, if even every line of his plays were accompanied with a comment, every intelligent reader would be indebted to the industry of him who produced it. Such uniformly has been the object of the notes now presented to the publick. Let us then hear no more of this barbarous jargon concerning Shakespeare’s having been *elucidated* into *obscurity*, and buried under the load of his commentators. Dryden is said to have regretted the success of his own instructions, and to have lamented that at length, in consequence of his critical prefaces, the town had become too skilful to be easily satisfied. The same observation may be made with respect to many of these objectors, to whom the meaning of some of our poet’s most difficult passages is now become so familiar, that they fancy they originally understood them “without a prompter;” and with great gravity exclaim against the unnecessary illustrations furnished by his Editors: nor ought we

much to wonder at this; for our poet himself has told us,

“ ——— ’tis a common proof,
 “ That lowliness is young ambition’s ladder,
 “ Whereto the climber upward turns his face;
 “ But when he once attains the upmost round,
 “ He then unto the ladder turns his back;
 “ Looks in the clouds.”—

I have constantly made it a rule in revising the notes of former editors, to compare such passages as they have cited from any author, with the book from which the extract was taken, if I could procure it; by which some inaccuracies have been rectified. The incorrect extract made by Dr. Warburton from Saviola’s treatise on *Honour and Honourable Quarrels*, to illustrate a passage in *As you like it*, fully proves the propriety of such a collation.

At the end of the tenth volume I have added an Appendix, containing corrections, and supplemental observations, made too late to be annexed to the plays to which they belong. Some object to an Appendix; but in my opinion, with very little reason. No book can be the worse for such a supplement; since the reader, if such be his caprice, need not examine it. If the objector means, that he wishes that all the information contained in an Appendix, were properly disposed in the preceding volumes, it must be acknowledged that such an arrangement would be extremely desirable: but as well might he require from the elephant the sprightliness and agility of the squirrel, or from the squirrel the wisdom and strength of the elephant, as expect, that an editor’s latest thoughts, suggested by discursive reading while the sheets that compose his volumes were passing through the

press, should form a part of his original work; that information acquired too late to be employed in its proper place, should yet be found there.

That the very few stage-directions which the old copies exhibit, were not taken from our author's manuscripts, but furnished by the players, is proved by one in *Macbeth*, Act IV. sc. i. where "*A show of eight kings*" is directed, "*and Banquo last, with a glass in his hand;*" though from the very words which the poet has written for *Macbeth*, it is manifest that the glass ought to be borne by the eighth king, and not by Banquo. All the stage-directions therefore throughout this work I have considered as wholly in my power, and have regulated them in the best manner I could. The reader will also, I think, be pleased to find the place in which every scene is supposed to pass, precisely ascertained: a species of information, for which, though it often throws light on the dialogue, we look in vain in the ancient copies, and which has been too much neglected by the modern editors.

The play of *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, which is now once more restored to our author, I originally intended to have subjoined, with *Titus Andronicus*, to the tenth volume; but, to preserve an equality of size in my volumes, have been obliged to give it a different place. The hand of Shakspeare being indubitably found in that piece, it will, I doubt not, be considered as a valuable accession; and it is of little consequence where it appears.

It has long been thought, that *Titus Andronicus* was not written originally by Shakspeare; about seventy years after his death, Ravenscroft having mentioned that he had been "told by some anciently conversant with the stage, that our poet only gave some master-touches to one or two of the

principal parts or characters." The very curious papers lately discovered in Dulwich College, from which large extracts are given at the end of the *History of the Stage*, prove, what I long since suspected, that this play, and *The First Part of King Henry VI.* were in possession of the scene when Shakspeare began to write for the stage; and the same manuscripts show, that it was then very common for a dramattick poet to alter and amend the work of a preceding writer. The question therefore is now decisively settled; and undoubtedly some additions were made to both these pieces by Shakspeare. It is observable that the second scene of the third act of *Titus Andronicus*, is not found in the quarto copy printed in 1611. It is therefore highly probable, that this scene was added by our author; and his hand may be traced in the preceding act, as well as in a few other places.² The additions which he made to *Pericles* are much more numerous, and therefore more strongly entitle it to a place among the dramattick pieces which he has adorned by his pen.

With respect to the other contested plays, *Sir John Oldcastle*, *The London Prodigal*, &c. which have now for near two centuries been falsely ascribed to our author, the manuscripts above mentioned completely clear him from that imputation; and prove, that while his great modesty made him set but little value on his own inimitable productions, he could patiently endure to have the miserable trash of other writers publicly imputed to him, without taking any measure to vindicate

² If ever the account-book of Mr. Heminge shall be discovered, we shall probably find in it—"Paid to William Shakspeare for mending *Titus Andronicus*." See Vol. III.

his fame. *Sir John Oldcastle*, we find from indubitable evidence, though ascribed in the title-page to "William Shakspeare," and printed in the year 1600, when his fame was in its meridian, was the joint-production of four other poets; Michael Drayton, Anthony Mundy, Richard Hathwaye, and Robert Wilson.³

In the Dissertation annexed to the three parts of *King Henry the Sixth*, I have discussed at large the question concerning their authenticity; and have assigned my reasons for thinking that the second and third of those plays were formed by Shakspeare, on two elder dramas now extant. Any disquisition therefore concerning these controverted pieces is here unnecessary.

Some years ago I published a short Essay on the economy and usages of our old theatres. The Historical Account of the English Stage, which has been formed on that essay, has swelled to such a size, in consequence of various researches since made, and a great accession of very valuable materials, that it is become almost a new work. Of these, the most important are the curious papers which have been discovered at Dulwich, and the very valuable Office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels to King James and King Charles the First, which have contributed to throw much light on our dramattick history, and furnished some singular anecdotes of the poets of those times.

Twelve years have elapsed since the Essay on the order of time in which the plays of Shakspeare were written, first appeared. A re-examination of these plays since that time has furnished me with

³ Vol. III. *Additions*.

several particulars in confirmation of what I had formerly suggested on this subject. On a careful revisal of that Essay, which, I hope, is improved as well as considerably enlarged, I had the satisfaction of observing that I had found reason to attribute but two plays to an era widely distant from that to which they had been originally ascribed; and to make only a minute change in the arrangement of a few others. Some information, however, which has been obtained since that Essay was printed in its present form, inclines me to think, that one of the two plays which I allude to, *The Winter's Tale*, was a still later production than I have supposed; for I have now good reason to believe, that it was first exhibited in the year 1613;⁴ and that consequently it must have been one of our poet's latest works.

Though above a century and a half has elapsed since the death of Shakspeare, it is somewhat extraordinary, (as I observed on a former occasion,) that none of his various editors should have attempted to separate his genuine poetical compositions from the spurious performances with which they have been long intermixed; or have taken the trouble to compare them with the earliest and most authentick copies. Shortly after his death, a very incorrect impression of his poems was issued out, which in every subsequent edition, previous to the year 1780, was implicitly followed. They have been carefully revised, and with many additional illustrations are now a second time faithfully printed from the original copies, excepting only

⁴ See *Emendations and Additions*, Vol. I. Part II. p. 286, [i. e. Mr. Malone's edition.]

The paragraph alluded to, in the present edition, will stand in its proper place. STEEVENS.

Venus and Adonis, of which I have not been able to procure the first impression. The second edition, printed in 1596, was obligingly transmitted to me by the late Reverend Thomas Warton, of whose friendly and valuable correspondence I was deprived by death, when these volumes were almost ready to be issued from the press. It is painful to recollect how many of (I had almost said) my coadjutors have died since the present work was begun:—the elegant scholar, and ingenious writer, whom I have just mentioned; Dr. Johnson, and Mr. Tyrwhitt: men, from whose approbation of my labours I had promised myself much pleasure, and whose stamp could give a value and currency to any work.

With the materials which I have been so fortunate as to obtain, relative to our poet, his kindred, and friends, it would not have been difficult to have formed a new Life of Shakspeare, less meagre and imperfect than that left us by Mr. Rowe: but the information which I have procured having been obtained at very different times, it is necessarily dispersed, partly in the copious notes subjoined to Rowe's Life, and partly in the Historical Account of our old actors. At some future time I hope to weave the whole into one uniform and connected narrative.

My inquiries having been carried on almost to the very moment of publication, some circumstances relative to our poet were obtained too late to be introduced into any part of the present work. Of these due use will be made hereafter.

The prefaces of Theobald, Hammer, and Warburton, I have not retained, because they appeared to me to throw no light on our author or his works: the room which they would have taken up,

will, I trust, be found occupied by more valuable matter.

As some of the preceding editors have justly been condemned for innovation, so perhaps (for of objections there is no end,) I may be censured for too strict an adherence to the ancient copies. I have constantly had in view the Roman sentiment adopted by Dr. Johnson, that "it is more honourable to save a citizen than to destroy an enemy," and, like him, "have been more careful to protect than to attack."—"I do not wish the reader to forget, (says the same writer,) that the most commodious (and he might have added, the most forcible and elegant,) is not always the true reading."⁵ On this principle I have uniformly proceeded, having resolved never to deviate from the authentick copies, merely because the phraseology was harsh or uncommon. Many passages, which have heretofore been considered as corrupt, and are now supported by the usage of contemporary writers, fully prove the propriety of this caution.⁶

⁵ *King Henry IV.* Part II.

⁶ See particularly *The Merchant of Venice*, Vol. VII. p. 297 :

"—— That many may be meant

"By the fool multitude."

with the note there.

We undoubtedly should not now write—

"But, lest myself be *guilty to self-wrong*,—"

yet we find this phrase in *The Comedy of Errors*, Act III.

Vol. XX. See also *The Winter's Tale*, Vol. IX. p. 420 :

"—— This your son-in-law,

"And son unto the king, (*whom heavens directing*),

"Is troth-plight to your daughter."

Measure for Measure, Vol. VI. p. 358 : "—to be so *bared*,—"

Coriolanus, Vol. XVI. p. 148, n. 2 :

"Which often, thus, correcting thy stout heart," &c.

Hamlet, Vol. XVIII. p. 40 :

"That he might not *beteem* the winds of heaven," &c.

The rage for innovation till within these last thirty years was so great, that many words were dismissed from our poet's text, which in his time were current in every mouth. In all the editions since that of Mr. Rowe, in the Second Part of *King Henry IV.* the word *channel*⁷ has been rejected, and *kennel* substituted in its room, though the former term was commonly employed in the same sense in the time of our author; and the learned Bishop of Worcester has strenuously endeavoured to prove that in *Cymbeline* the poet wrote—not *shakes*, but *shuts* or *checks*, "all our buds from growing;"⁸ though the authenticity of the original reading is established beyond all controversy by two other passages of Shakspeare. Very soon, indeed, after his death, this rage for innovation seems to have seized his editors; for in the year 1616 an edition of his *Rape of Lucrece* was published, which was said to be *newly revised and corrected*; but in which, in fact, several arbitrary changes were made, and the ancient diction rejected for one somewhat more modern. Even in the first complete collection of his plays published in 1623,

As you like it, Vol. VIII. p. 59, n. 7:

"My voice is *ragged*,—"

Cymbeline, Vol. XVIII. p. 647, n. 2:

"Whom heavens, in justice, (both on her and hers,)

"Have laid most heavy hand."

⁷ Act II. sc. i: "—throw the quean in the *channel*." In that passage, as in many others, I have silently restored the original reading, without any observation; but the word in this sense, being now obsolete, should have been illustrated by a note. This defect, however, will be found remedied in *K. Henry VI.* P. II. Act II. sc. ii:

"As if a *channel* should be call'd a sea."

⁸ Hurd's *HOR.* 4th. edit. Vol. I. p. 55.

some changes were undoubtedly made from ignorance of his meaning and phraseology. They had, I suppose, been made in the playhouse copies after his retirement from the theatre. Thus in *Othello*, Brabantio is made to call to his domesticks to raise "some special officers of *might*," instead of "officers of *night*;" and the phrase "*of all loves*," in the same play, not being understood, "*for love's sake*" was substituted in its room. So, in *Hamlet*, we have *ere ever* for *or ever*, and *rites* instead of the more ancient word, *crants*. In *King Lear*, Act I. sc. i. the substitution of—"Goes thy heart with this?" instead of—"Goes this with thy heart?" without doubt arose from the same cause. In the plays of which we have no quarto copies, we may be sure that similar innovations were made, though we have now no certain means of detecting them.

After what has been proved concerning the sophistications and corruptions of the Second Folio, we cannot be surprized that when these plays were republished by Mr. Rowe in the beginning of this century from a later folio, in which the interpolations of the former were all preserved, and many new errors added, almost every page of his work was disfigured by accumulated corruptions. In Mr. Pope's edition our author was not less misrepresented; for though by examining the oldest copies he detected some errors, by his numerous fanciful alterations the poet was so completely modernized, that I am confident, had he "re-visited the glimpses of the moon," he would not have understood his own works. From the quartos indeed a few valuable restorations were made; but all the advantage that was thus obtained,

was outweighed by arbitrary changes, transpositions, and interpolations.

The readers of Shakspeare being disgusted with the liberties taken by Mr. Pope, the subsequent edition of Theobald was justly preferred ; because he professed to adhere to the ancient copies more strictly than his competitor, and illustrated a few passages by extracts from the writers of our poet's age. That his work should at this day be considered of any value, only shows how long impressions will remain, when they are once made ; for Theobald, though not so great an innovator as Pope, was yet a considerable innovator ; and his edition being printed from that of his immediate predecessor, while a few arbitrary changes made by Pope were detected, innumerable sophistications were silently adopted. His knowledge of the contemporary authors was so scanty, that all the illustration of that kind dispersed throughout his volumes, has been exceeded by the researches which have since been made for the purpose of elucidating a single play.

Of Sir Thomas Hanmer it is only necessary to say, that he adopted almost all the innovations of Pope, adding to them whatever caprice dictated.

To him succeeded Dr. Warburton, a critick, who (as hath been said of Salmasius) seems to have erected his throne on a heap of stones, that he might have them at hand to throw at the heads of all those who passed by. His unbounded licence in substituting his own chimerical conceits in the place of the author's genuine text, has been so fully shown by his revisers, that I suppose no critical reader will ever again open his volumes. An hundred strappadoes, according to an Italian comick writer, would not have induced Petrarch,

were he living, to subscribe to the meaning which certain commentators after his death had by their glosses extorted from his works. It is a curious speculation to consider how many thousand would have been requisite for this editor to have inflicted on our great dramatick poet for the same purpose. The defence which has been made for Dr. Warburton on this subject, by some of his friends, is singular. "He well knew," it has been said, "that much the greater part of his notes do not throw any light on the poet of whose works he undertook the revision, and that he frequently imputed to Shakspeare a meaning of which he never thought; but the editor's great object was to display his own learning, not to illustrate his author, and this end he obtained; for in spite of all the clamour against him, his work added to his reputation as a scholar."—Be it so then; but let none of his admirers ever dare to unite his name with that of Shakspeare; and let us at least be allowed to wonder, that the learned editor should have had so little respect for the greatest poet that has appeared since the days of Homer, as to use a commentary on his works merely as "*a stalking-horse, under the presentation of which he might shoot his wit.*"

At length the task of revising these plays was undertaken by one, whose extraordinary powers of mind, as they rendered him the admiration of his contemporaries, will transmit his name to posterity as the brightest ornament of the eighteenth century; and will transmit it without competition, if we except a great orator, philosopher, and statesman,⁹ now living, whose talents and virtues are

⁹ The Right Honourable Edmund Burke.

an honour to human nature. In 1765, Dr. Johnson's edition, which had long been impatiently expected, was given to the publick. His admirable preface, (perhaps the finest composition in our language,) his happy, and in general just, characters of these plays, his refutation of the false glosses of Theobald and Warburton, and his numerous explanations of involved and difficult passages, are too well known, to be here enlarged upon; and therefore I shall only add, that his vigorous and comprehensive understanding threw more light on his author than all his predecessors had done.

In one observation, however, concerning our poet, I do not entirely concur with him. "It is not (he remarks) very grateful to consider how little the succession of editors has added to this author's power of pleasing. He was read, admired, studied and imitated, while he was yet deformed with all the improprieties which ignorance and neglect could accumulate upon him."

He certainly was read, admired, studied, and imitated, at the period mentioned; but surely not in the same degree as at present. The succession of editors has effected this; it has made him understood; it has made him popular; it has shown every one who is capable of reading, how much superior he is not only to Jonson and Fletcher, whom the bad taste of the last age from the time of the Restoration to the end of the century set above him, but to all the dramattick poets of antiquity:

"——— Jam monte potitus,

"Ridet anhelantem dura ad vestigia turbam."

Every author who pleases must surely please

more as he is more understood, and there can be no doubt that Shakspeare is now infinitely better understood than he was in the last century. To say nothing of the people at large, it is clear that Dryden himself, though a great admirer of our poet, and D'Avenant, though he wrote for the stage in the year 1627, did not always understand him.¹ The very books which are necessary to our

¹ "The tongue in general is so much refined since Shakspeare's time, that many of his words, and more of his phrases, are scarce intelligible." Preface to Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida*. The various changes made by Dryden in particular passages in that play, and by him and D'Avenant in *The Tempest*, prove decisively that they frequently did not understand our poet's language.

In his defence of the Epilogue to *The Conquest of Granada*, Dryden arraigns Ben Jonson for using the personal, instead of the neutral, pronoun, and *unfeard* for *unafraid*:

"Though heaven should speak with all *his* wrath at once,

"We should stand upright, and *unfear'd*."

"*His* (says he) is ill syntax with *heaven*, and by *unfear'd* he means *unafraid*; words of a quite contrary signification.—He perpetually uses *ports* for *gates*, which is an affected error in him, to introduce Latin by the loss of the English idiom."

Now *his* for *its*, however ill the syntax may be, was the common language of the time; and to *fear*, in the sense of to *terrify*, is found not only in all the poets, but in every dictionary of that age. With respect to *ports*, Shakspeare, who will not be suspected of affecting Latinisms, frequently employs that word in the same sense as Jonson has done, and as probably the whole kingdom did; for the word is still so used in Scotland.

D'Avenant's alteration of *Macbeth*, and *Measure for Measure*, furnish many proofs of the same kind. In *The Law against Lovers*, which he formed on *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *Measure for Measure*, are these lines:

"——— nor do I think,

"The prince has *true* discretion who affects it."

The passage imitated is in *Measure for Measure*:

"Nor do I think the man of *safe* discretion,

"That does affect it."

If our poet's language had been well understood, the epithet *safe* would not have been rejected. See *Othello*:

author's illustration, were of so little account in their time, that what now we can scarce procure at any price, was then the furniture of the nursery or stall.² In fifty years after our poet's death,

“ My blood begins my *safer* guides to rule ;
 “ And passion, having my best judgment collid,” &c.
 So also, Edgar, in *King Lear* :
 “ The *safer sense* will ne'er accommodate
 “ His master thus.”

* The price of books at different periods may serve in some measure to ascertain the taste and particular study of the age. At the sale of Dr. Francis Bernard's library in 1698, the following books were sold at the annexed prices :

FOLIO.

Gower de Confessione Amantis. - - -	0	2	6
Now sold for two guineas.			
Caxton's Recueyll of the Histories of Troy, 1502.	0	3	0
— Chronicle of England. - - - -	0	4	0
Hall's Chronicle. - - - -	0	6	4
Grafton's Chronicle. - - - -	0	6	10
Holinshed's Chronicle, 1587. - - -	1	10	6

This book is now frequently sold for ten guineas.

QUARTO.

Turberville on hawking and hunting. - -	0	0	6
Copley's Wits, Fits, and Fancies. - - -	0	0	4
Puttenham's Art of English Poesie. - -	0	0	4

This book is now usually sold for a guinea.

Powell's History of Wales. - - - -	0	1	5
Painter's second tome of the Palace of Pleasure.	0	0	4

The two volumes of Painter's Palace of Pleasure are now usually sold for three guineas.

OCTAVO.

Metamorphosis of Ajax, by Sir John Harrington.	0	0	4
--	---	---	---

Dryden mentions that he was then become “*a little obsolete.*” In the beginning of the present century Lord Shaftesbury complains of his “*rude unpolished stile, and his ANTIQUATED phrase and wit;*” and not long afterwards Gildon informs us that he had been rejected from some modern collections of poetry on account of his *obsolete language*. Whence could these representations have proceeded, but because our poet, not being diligently studied, not being compared with the contemporary writers, was not understood? If he had been “read, admired, studied, and imitated,” in the same degree as he is now, the enthusiasm of some one or other of his admirers in the last age would have induced him to make some enquiries concerning the history of his theatrical career, and the anecdotes of his private life. But no such person was found; no anxiety in the publick sought out any particulars concerning him after the Restoration, (if we except the few which were collected by Mr. Aubrey,) though at that time the history of his life must have been known to many; for his sister Joan Hart, who must have known much of his early years, did not die till 1646: his favourite daughter, Mrs. Hall, lived till 1649; and his second daughter, Judith, was living at Stratford-upon-Avon in the beginning of the year 1662. His grand-daughter, Lady Barnard, did not die till 1670. Mr. Thomas Combe, to whom Shakspeare bequeathed his sword, survived our poet above forty years, having died at Stratford in 1657. His elder brother, William Combe, lived till 1667. Sir Richard Bishop, who was born in 1585, lived at Bridgetown near Stratford till 1672; and his son, Sir William Bishop, who was born in 1626, died there in 1700. From all these persons without doubt many circumstances relative to

Shakspeare might have been obtained; but that was an age as deficient in literary curiosity as in taste.

It is remarkable that in a century after our poet's death, five editions only of his plays were published; which probably consisted of not more than three thousand copies. During the same period three editions of the plays of Fletcher, and four of those of Jonson had appeared. On the other hand, from the year 1716 to the present time, that is, in seventy-four years, but two editions of the former writer, and one of the latter, have been issued from the press; while above thirty thousand copies of Shakspeare have been dispersed through England.³ That nearly as many editions of the works of Jonson as of Shakspeare should have been demanded in the last century, will not appear surprising, when we recollect what Dryden has related soon after the Restoration: that "others were then generally preferred before him."⁴ By *others* Jonson

³ Notwithstanding our high admiration of Shakspeare, we are yet without a splendid edition of his works, with the illustrations which the united efforts of various commentators have contributed; while in other countries the most brilliant decorations have been lavished on their distinguished poets. The editions of Pope and Hanmer, may, with almost as much propriety, be called *their* works, as those of Shakspeare; and therefore can have no claim to be admitted into any elegant library. Nor will the promised edition, with engravings, undertaken by Mr. Alderman Boydell, remedy this defect, for it is not to be accompanied with notes. At some future, and no very distant time, I mean to furnish the publick with an elegant edition in quarto, (without engravings,) in which the text of the present edition shall be followed, with the illustrations subjoined in the same page.

⁴ In the year 1642, whether from some capricious vicissitude in the publick taste, or from a general inattention to the drama, we find Shirley complaining that few came to see our author's performances:

and Fletcher were meant. To attempt to show to the readers of the present day the absurdity of

“ ————— You see

“ What audience we have : *what company*

“ *To Shakspeare comes ?* whose mirth did once beguile

“ Dull hours, and buskin'd made even sorrow smile ;

“ So lovely were the wounds, that men would say

“ They could endure the bleeding a whole day ;

“ *He has but few friends lately.*”

Prologue to *The Sisters*.

“ Shakspeare to thee was dull, whose best jest lies

“ I'th lady's questions, and the fool's replies ;

“ Old fashion'd wit, which walk'd from town to town,

“ In trunk-hose, which our fathers call'd the clown ;

“ Whose wit our nicer times would obsceness call,

“ And which made bawdry pass for comical.

“ Nature was all his art ; thy vein was free

“ As his, but without his scurrility.”

Verses on Fletcher, by William Cartwright,

1647.

After the Restoration, on the revival of the theatres, the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher were esteemed so much superior to those of our author, that we are told by Dryden, “ two of their pieces were acted through the year, for one of Shakspeare's.” If his testimony needed any corroboration, the following verses would afford it :

“ In our old plays, the humour, love, and passion,

“ Like doublet, hose, and cloak, are out of fashion ;

“ That which the world call'd wit in Shakspeare's age,

“ Is laugh'd at, as improper for our stage.”

Prologue to *Shirley's Love Tricks*, 1667.

“ At every shop, while *Shakspeare's* lofty stile

“ Neglected lies, to mice and worms a spoil,

“ Gilt on the back, just smoking from the press,

“ The apprentice shews you D'Urfey's *Hudibras*,

“ Crown's *Mask*, bound up with Settle's choicest labours,

“ And promises some new essay of Babor's.”

SATIRE, published in 1680.

“ ——— against old as well as new to rage,

“ Is the peculiar frenzy of this age.

“ Shakspeare must down, and you must praise no more,

“ Soft *Desdemona*, nor the jealous Moor :

such a preference, would be an insult to their understandings. When we endeavour to trace any thing like a ground for this preposterous taste, we are told of Fletcher's *ease*, and Jonson's *learning*. Of how little use his learning was to him, an ingenious writer of our own time has shown with that vigour and animation for which he was distinguished. "Jonson, in the serious drama, is as much an imitator, as Shakspeare is an original. He was very learned, as Sampson was very strong, to his own hurt. Blind to the nature of tragedy, he pulled down all antiquity on his head, and buried himself under it. We see nothing of Jonson, nor indeed of his admired (but also murdered) ancients; for what shone in the historian is a cloud on the poet, and *Catiline* might have been a good play, if Sallust had never written.

"Who knows whether Shakspeare might not have thought less, if he had read more? Who knows if he might not have laboured under the load of Jonson's learning, as Enceladus under *Ætna*? His mighty genius, indeed, through the most mountainous oppression would have breathed

"Shakspeare, whose fruitful genius, happy wit,
 "Was fram'd and finish'd at a lucky hit,
 "The pride of nature, and the shame of schools,
 "Born to create, and not to learn from, rules,
 "Must please no more: his bastards now deride
 "Their father's nakedness they ought to hide."

Prologue by Sir Charles Sedley, to the *Wary Widow*,
 1693.

To the honour of Margaret Duchess of Newcastle be it remembered, that however fantastick in other respects, she had taste enough to be fully sensible of our poet's merit, and was one of the first who after the Restoration published a very high eulogy on him. See her *Sociable Letters*, folio, 1664, p. 244.

out some of his inextinguishable fire; yet possibly he might not have risen up into that giant, that much more than common man, at which we now gaze with amazement and delight. Perhaps he was as learned as his dramattick province required; for whatever other learning he wanted, he was master of two books unknown to many of the profoundly read, though books which the last conflagration alone can destroy; the book of nature, and that of man."⁵

To this and the other encomiums on our great poet which will be found in the following pages, I shall not attempt to make any addition. He has justly observed, that

“ To guard a title that was rich before,
 “ To gild refined gold, or paint the lily,
 “ To throw a perfume on the violet,
 “ To smooth the ice, or add another hue
 “ Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light
 “ To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,
 “ Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.”

Let me, however, be permitted to remark, that beside all his other transcendent merits, he was the great refiner and polisher of our language. His compound epithets, his bold metaphors, the energy of his expressions, the harmony of his numbers, all these render the language of Shakspeare one of his principal beauties. Unfortunately none of his letters, or other prose compositions, not in a dramattick form, have reached posterity; but if any of them ever shall be discovered, they will, I am confident, exhibit the same perspicuity,

⁵ *Conjectures on Original Composition*, by Dr Edward Young.

the same cadence, the same elegance and vigour, which we find in his plays. "Words and phrases," says Dryden, "must of necessity receive a change in succeeding ages; but it is almost a miracle, that much of his language remains so pure; and that he who began dramattick poetry amongst us, untaught by any, and, as Ben Jonson tells us, without learning, should by the force of his own genius perform so much, that in a manner he has left no praise for any who come after him."

In these prefatory observations my principal object was, to ascertain the true state and respective value of the ancient copies, and to mark out the course which has been pursued in the edition now offered to the publick. It only remains, that I should return my very sincere acknowledgements to those gentlemen, to whose good offices I have been indebted in the progress of my work. My thanks are particularly due to Francis Ingram, of Ribbiford in Worcestershire, Esq. for the very valuable Office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, and several other curious papers, which formerly belonged to that gentleman; to Penn Asheton Curzon, Esq. for the use of the very rare copy of *King Richard III.* printed in 1597; to the Master, and the Rev. Mr. Smith, librarian, of Dulwich College, for the Manuscripts relative to one of our ancient theatres, which they obligingly transmitted to me; to John Kipling, Esq. keeper of the rolls in Chancery, who in the most liberal manner directed every search to be made in the Chapel of the Rolls that I should require, with a view to illustrate the history of our poet's life; and to Mr. Richard Clark, registrar of the diocese of Worcester, who with equal liberality, at my request, made many searches in his office for

the wills of various persons. I am also in a particular manner indebted to the kindness and attention of the Rev. Mr. Davenport, vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon, who most obligingly made every inquiry in that town and the neighbourhood, which I suggested as likely to throw any light on the Life of Shakspeare.

I deliver my book to the world not without anxiety; conscious, however, that I have strenuously endeavoured to render it not unworthy the attention of the publick. If the researches which have been made for the illustration of our poet's works, and for the dissertations which accompany the present edition, shall afford as much entertainment to others, as I have derived from them, I shall consider the time expended on it as well employed. Of the dangerous ground on which I tread, I am fully sensible. "Multa sunt in his studiis (to use the words of a venerable fellow-labourer⁶ in the mines of Antiquity) *cineri supposita, doloso*. Errata possint esse multa à memoria. Quis enim in memoriæ thesauro omnia simul sic complectatur, ut pro arbitrato suo possit expromere? Errata possint esse plura ab imperitia. Quis enim tam peritus, ut in cæco hoc antiquitatis mari, cum tempore colluctatus, scopulis non allidatur? Hæc tamen à te, humanissime lector, tua humanitas, mea industria, patriæ charitas, et SHAKSPEARI dignitas, mihi exorent, ut quid mei sit judicii, sine aliorum præjudicio libere proferam; ut eâdem via qua alii in his studiis solent, insistam; et ut erratis, si ego agnoscam, tu ignoscas." Those who are the warmest admirers of our great poet, and most

⁶ Camden.

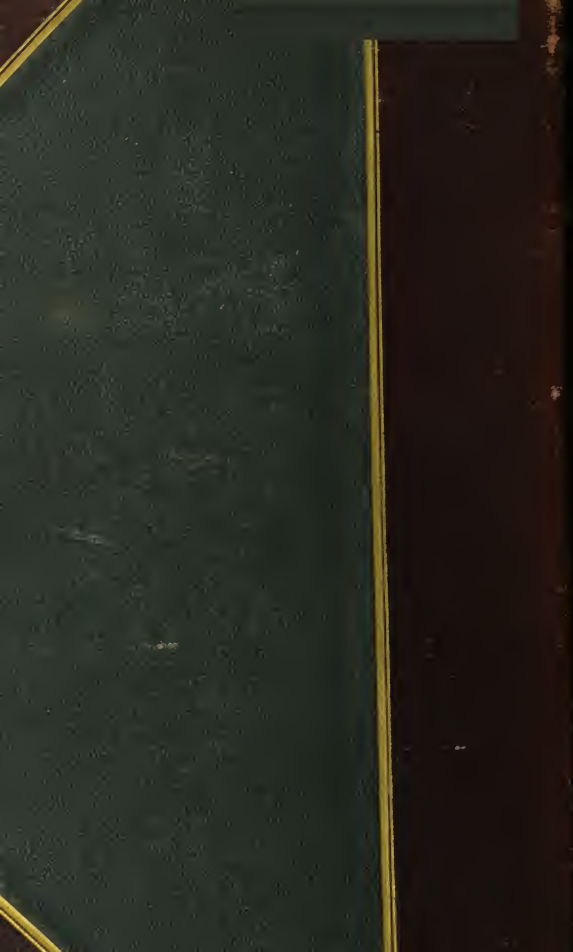
conversant with his writings, best know the difficulty of such a work, and will be most ready to pardon its defects ; remembering, that in all arduous undertakings, it is easier to conceive than to accomplish ; that “ the will is infinite, and the execution confined ; that the desire is boundless, and the act a slave to limit.” MALONE.

Queen Anne Street, East,
October 25, 1790.

END OF VOL. I.

DAVISON, Lombard-street,
Whitefriars, London.





GretagMacbeth™ ColorChecker Color Rendition Chart

